

HISTORY IN THE MAKING

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History in the Making is an annual publication of the California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB) Alpha Delta Nu Chapter of the Phi Alpha Theta National History Honor Society, and is sponsored by the History Department and the Instructionally Related Programs at CSUSB. Issues are published at the end of the spring semester of each academic year.

Phi Alpha Theta's mission is to promote the study of history through the encouragement of research, good teaching, publication and the exchange of learning and ideas among historians. The organization seeks to bring students, teachers, and writers of history together for intellectual and social exchanges, which promote and assist historical research and publication by our members in a variety of ways.

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History in the Making

Introduction

Now, this real time is, in essence, a continuum. It is also perpetual change. The great problems of historical inquiry derive from the antitheses of these two attributes.

- Marc Bloch (1886-1944)¹

Welcome to the sixteenth edition of California State University, San Bernardino's (CSUSB) annual student-run history journal, *History in the Making*. As with previous editions, the journal is a collection of work from talented students and recent graduates from CSUSB and other collegiate institutions. Once again, the editorial board strives to create an engaging volume of articles and reviews that capture the nature of historical inquiry in the past and present. This year's journal invites discussion on the inherent contradiction between the continuous nature of time and the transformations it brings. The articles herein speak to past historical events while signifying their importance to the present. We hope that readers find this volume enlightening and engage in using the articles as discussion points and future historical research.

This year's board is honored to present nine full-length articles, three short articles, three in-memorial pieces, one television review, and one book review. Topics within the journal range from racial inequalities within women's reproductive rights to social justice for immigrants to combat strategies. The sixteenth edition of the journal grapples with timely themes such as African American and Latinx communities reclaiming physical and social autonomy, social justice for ethnic minorities, racial discrimination regarding women's reproductive rights, technological advances in combat weaponry, the emergence of authoritarian regimes, and

¹ Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft* (Toronto: Knopf, 1953). 28.

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biases within news reporting. This year we are pleased to introduce a new section entitled History in Media, highlighting the evolving depiction of women in film and celebrating cultural diversity on-screen. Additional pieces are stories of enduring individual legacies and challenges to accepted interpretations of history.

The image on the cover of this year's journal was captured during the 1979 Iranian Revolution and entitled, "Days of Blood, Days of Fire." The photograph depicts a young Iranian woman openly protesting. The articles in this year's journal share a theme of opposing repressive policies and this image was chosen for its powerful message.

Our first article is "Reproductive Abuse and the Sterilization of Women of Color" by Bshara Alsheikh. In the wake of the eugenics movement of the 1930s and 1940s, Alsheikh examines the systemically racist policies that targeted Chicana, Black, and Indigenous women and the subsequent trauma they endured. Alsheikh explores state-sanctioned, race-based sterilization practices, the legal and medical ethics of the *Madrigal v. Quilligan* ruling, and the continued efforts to suppress minority reproduction.

Our second article is from Braedon McGhee entitled, "The Double-Edged Sword: Examining the Contradictory Nature of SAVAK and the U.S.-Iran Clidency Relationship." McGhee examines the contentious and (occasionally) cooperative nature of the relationship between the United States and Iran during the Cold War. McGhee links U.S. political and intelligence support of Shah Reza Pahlavi's regime to the creation of a secret police force, Sâzemân-e Ettlâ'ât va Amniat-e Kešvar (SAVAK). McGhee analyzes how the U.S. directed and funded SAVAK under the auspices of containing communism while the Shah deployed the unit against his enemies.

Our third article is "Mixing: A History of Anti-Miscegenation Laws in the United States" by Nyla Provost. This article presents

the lasting effects of the legal prohibition of interracial marriage. Provost examines how anti-miscegenation laws have promoted and sustained white supremacy and America's current racial caste system.

Our fourth article, "Seeking Social Justice in the City of Los Angeles: Mary Julia Workman," highlights the forgotten achievements of California native Mary Julia Workman and her activism during the progressive era. Author Jose Luis Castro Padilla examines Workman's contributions to the betterment of marginalized communities at the Brownson Settlement House. Castro Padilla brings to light the challenges Workman faced as a woman navigating the Catholic Church bureaucracy in her pursuit of social justice for immigrants during the Americanization period.

Our fifth article, "An Analysis of American Civil War Strategy and Tactics and the Significance of Technological Innovations," by Ryan Rethaford. Rethaford examines how technological advances in combat weaponry contributed to the conflict becoming America's deadliest war. Rethaford challenges the argument that neither Union nor Confederate forces utilized the era's military technological advancements.

The Journal's sixth article, "The San Bernardino Daily Sun and Its Local Reporting of the Great War," analyzes a local newspaper's reporting of World War I. Author Jeff LeBlanc draws upon primary sources from the San Bernardino Sun to evaluate the reporting and accuracy of the newspaper.

Our seventh full-length article, "Reproductive Justice and the Black Panther Party" by Dakota Mancuso, adds to the discourse of the Black Panther Party's social activism. Mancuso provides insights into the Black Panther Party's response to social inequalities that plagued their communities. He argues that the BPP's creation of "survival programs" enabled them to act as an early proponent of reproductive justice.

Our eighth article, from Vivian Alvarez Rodriguez, is entitled “Student and Youth Sandinistas in Nicaragua, 1979-2018.” Alvarez Rodriguez compares the student and youth support of the 1979 Nicaraguan Revolution with the student-led anti-government protests of 2018. Alvarez Rodriguez analyzes the changes in Nicaragua’s government during the thirty-nine-year period and how students and youth activism have been pivotal in shaping the nation’s politics.

Our ninth and final full-length article is “Judge Paul J. McCormick: The Prelude to Desegregation in the United States” by Jose Luis Castro Padilla. Adding to the discourse on racial segregation, Castro Padilla focuses on the figure behind the landmark case that ended segregation in California. Castro Padilla offers insight into the life of Judge Paul J. McCormick, and his views on social justice led to the decision in the *Mendez v. Westminster* case that would provide the precedent for *Brown v. Board of Education* and pave the way for desegregation in the United States.

Our History in Media section contains articles from three contributors. The first article belongs to Brooke Denham, entitled “Feminism and the Effects of Horror Films on the Movement,” which discusses the feminist movement and how the discriminatory tropes within horror films affected the movement. Our next article, “Infinite Diversity or Infinite Opportunity: A Look at Star Trek and its Cultural Influence,” by Kendra Vaughan, analyzes the impact Star Trek had on culture, society, and the advancement of technology. Our final article in this section is “Woman Warriors: The Fighting Women of The Woman King and Black Panther “ by Rossandra Martinez and Daniela Bedolla, which focuses on the cinematic depiction of Amazonian women in roles that men historically portrayed.

This year's In Memoriam section honors three figures who have passed. George "Matt" Patino remembers the literary life of popular historian David McCullough. Next, Erin Herklotz discusses the life and influence of Buddhist Monk Thich Nhat Hanh. And Devin Gillen writes in remembrance of Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, a role model and voice for young Palestinian girls.

Reviews make up our final section. The first contribution to this section is a television review of "The Gilded Age" by Rossandra Martinez and Daniela Bedolla, exploring the intersectionality of race, class, and gender. Our second review is a literature review of "American Expectation: Empire and the Deep State" by Devin Gillen.

**Matt Patino and Evy Zermeno
Chief Editors**

History in the Making

Acknowledgments

The *History in the Making* journal is only possible with the hard work, dedication, and passion of California State University, San Bernardino students, faculty, and staff. We would like to thank the talented authors and editors who contributed to this year's edition. From the "call-for-papers" to the collaborative editing process and meticulous copy-editing stage, the authors and editors worked diligently to produce the best long-form research pieces, in memoriam articles, and media reviews possible. Their commitment to the publishing process has created a timely and thoughtful edition of *History in the Making*.

The editorial board thanks Dr. Tiffany Jones for her guidance and continuous support. While the journal is a student-run publication, work of this caliber is only possible with her patience, insight, and availability. The editorial board extends their gratitude to Dr. Jeremy Murray for lending his expertise, enthusiasm, and support. The contributions of Dr. Jones and Dr. Murray are integral to the successful publication of the journal. Additionally, we would like to acknowledge the contributions of the CSUSB History Department faculty who worked with the authors and editors to ensure the academic integrity of their work.

Finally, we would like to thank Pamela Crosson, History Department Administrative Support Coordinator, Michael Morse, Brandon Hernandez, Michelle Hernandez, Eddie Delgado and their colleagues in Printing Services and Keith Askew in Shipping and Receiving, who generously offer their outstanding services and support to the *History in the Making* journal every year.

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Articles

Reproductive Abuse and the Sterilization of Women of Color

By Bshara Alsheikh

Abstract: Women of color have long suffered targeted and systematic racial discrimination and attempts to control their populations by the state. Well after eugenic rhetoric and policies' prime in the 1930s and 1940s, and the Civil Rights movements of the mid-century, Chicana, Black, and Indigenous women continued to be victimized by state-sanctioned eugenic policy. This paper examines the way that eugenic rhetoric and policy evolved from the first sterilization laws in the nation passed in California that targeted criminality to later legislation and rhetoric that explicitly targeted racial minorities.

Introduction

Historically, state-sanctioned reproductive abuse in the United States functioned as a tool of white supremacy to deny women of color access to reproductive health services and deprive them of bodily autonomy through oppressive government overreach, exemplified by eugenic policy and forced sterilizations. The eugenics movement operated on the precept that the human race was perfectible and used pseudo-science to rationalize white supremacy and the draconian Jim Crow laws of racial segregation.¹

¹ Loretta Ross and Rickie Solinger, *Reproductive Justice: An Introduction* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017), 30.

California's history is fundamentally intertwined with the national eugenics movement; the state functioned as the nation's pioneer and architect of eugenic policy throughout the twentieth century.² Originally formalized by state law in 1909, eugenic ideals continued to victimize women of color by the end of the century. The policy makers and doctors that removed women's reproductive autonomy, used economic reasoning to justify the abuse, supposedly preventing their neutralized future progeny from burdening taxpayers.³ Systematic reproductive abuse characterized federal and state legislation related to Chicana, Native American, and Black women.

California's Eugenic History

California was at the forefront of the national eugenics movement, between 1909 and the 1960s an estimated 20,000 sterilizations, approximately one-third of all those performed in the United States, were carried out in the state.⁴ The original sterilization law passed by the California State Legislature in 1909 "permit[ed the] asexualization of inmates of the state hospitals and the California Home for the Care and Training of feeble-minded children, and of convicts in the state prisons."⁵ The bill asserted that it is beneficial not just for the state of California, but to the moral and mental condition of the inmate to be "asexualized," or sterilized.⁶ Initially, only patients or inmates that were convicted of two sexual offenses or three other crimes were eligible to be sterilized.⁷ This law

² Alexandra Minna Stern, *Eugenic Nation: Faults and Frontiers of Better Breeding in Modern America*, (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2016), 84.

³ Karina Cardenas, "Who Makes the Decision to Sterilize Mexican Women? : The Doctor-Patient Debate in *Madrigal v. Quilligan* in the 1970s." *California State University, Los Angeles, Perspectives*, 45 (2018): 72.

⁴ Stern, *Eugenic Nation: Faults and Frontiers of Better Breeding in Modern America*, 115.

⁵ California Statutes 1909, Chapter 720, §1, p. 1093-1094.

⁶ California Statutes 1909.

⁷ Stern, *Eugenic Nation*, 111.

empowered the state to commit reproductive abuses under the pretense of oversight and accountability to the public and under the rhetorical justification of criminal punishment. The bill required three people to approve sterilization: the Superintendent of the sterilizing facility, the Secretary of the State Board of Health, and the Resident Physician of said facility.⁸ This layer of accountability ultimately meant little to nothing, particularly when considering fair treatment for people of color, when all of the components of the tribunal were convinced of their own racial superiority.

The 1927 Supreme Court ruling in *Buck v. Bell* gave the federal government the green light to sterilize women with impunity and assigned the label of imbecility to whomever they choose to sterilize.⁹ According to the case, a Virginia state mental hospital accepted Carrie Buck (1906-1983), a “feeble-minded woman,” into their care, where she was sterilized.¹⁰ Her mental condition was prominent in the last three generations of her family, which was considered justification to sterilize her to advance the supposed “health and the benefit of society.”¹¹ Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. (1847-1935) defended the necessity of legislation in order to stop the country from “being swamped with incompetence... Three generations of imbeciles are enough.”¹² This abhorrent language shows the malignant indifference of authorities and provided the legal justification for the indignities forced upon many more women in the future.

The fear of the potential collapse of their Western society occupied the forefront of eugenicists’ mindset in the 1930s, which pushed those in positions of power to implement their theories.¹³ Superintendents of California state orphanages and hospitals

⁸ Stern, *Eugenic Nation*, 111.

⁹ Dorothy E. Roberts, *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty* (New York, NY: Vintage, 1999), 69.

¹⁰ “Buck v. Bell”, Oyez. Accessed December 8, 2022, <https://www.oyez.org/cases/1900-1940/274us200>.

¹¹ “Buck v. Bell,” Oyez.

¹² “Buck v. Bell,” Oyez.

¹³ Stern, *Eugenic Nation*, 83.

argued for eugenic sterilization as a means to decrease the economic burden on society forced to treat defective traits in the general population's offspring. The elite of California considered eugenics a potential remedy to all the socio-economic issues of the state.¹⁴ In the opinion of the elites, through eugenic policy, California would save thousands of dollars by avoiding the birth of defective children who would eventually overcrowd mental institutions. Still, most importantly, society would supposedly be able to protect itself from the continued contamination of humanity by preventing the reproduction of the physically and mentally unfit (which often meant non-white).

Fred Hogue (1872-1941) was a prominent leader in the California eugenics movement and a contributor to the *Los Angeles Times* from 1920-1939 where he provided counsel to readers concerned about the passing of genetic flaws. Hogue exhorted his readers to breed "intelligently" and take into account the fate of children yet to be born.¹⁵ Furthermore, and more ominously, he argued that the state had a fundamental right and moral duty to end the cycle of hereditary degeneracy. To implement his eugenic views, Hogue backed unsuccessful measures proposed in 1935 and 1937 that would have expanded the original 1909 sterilization law and created a State Board of Eugenics. These laws also extended the reach of the sterilization statute to include jails, correctional institutions, reformatories, and detention camps, in addition to mental hospitals and homes for the feeble-minded.¹⁶

The proposed legislation granted superintendents, wardens, and directors of all state run institutions the authority to request the sterilization of any patient or convict who, upon release, appeared likely to have children prone to severe physical or mental deficiencies, for which the metrics to diagnose were ambiguous with no set parameters or guidelines.¹⁷ The changes to the 1909 law would have also removed the tribunal as a layer of oversight,

¹⁴ Stern, *Eugenic Nation*, 83.

¹⁵ Stern, *Eugenic Nation*, 83.

¹⁶ Stern, *Eugenic Nation*, 83.

¹⁷ Stern, *Eugenic Nation*, 83-84.

leaving state authorities in those institutions a *carte blanche* to sterilize whomever they wished.¹⁸ The new provisions also required documents related to the sterilization procedure to be kept from the public to shield doctors and governmental officials from civil lawsuits.¹⁹ These expanded statutes, advocated for by Hogue, practically eliminated all civil and criminal culpability for state authorities or institutions. Even though these 1935 and 1937 bills were defeated in the legislative process, the breadth and depth suggested demonstrated the will exerted by eugenicists attempting to directly influence the law and government of California at the time.²⁰

To increase social and political pressures to implement eugenic policy, individuals eventually formed groups such as The Human Betterment Foundation (HBF), one of California's prominent eugenic organizations.²¹ The HBF advertised sterilization as "one of the greatest advances in modern civilization" and that "It is not a novelty or an experiment" in a pamphlet published in 1939 in the city of Pasadena.²² The document boasts about the usefulness of sterilization as "a surgical operation, which prevents parenthood without in any way or degree unsexing the patient or impairing his or her health."²³ It contrasts contemporary practices to the "Primitive and pagan peoples [who] castrated boys to produce eunuchs" and assured readers that, as practiced since 1899, "modern sterilization is not a mutilation in any sense of the word."²⁴ The HBF contextualized sterilization in words that made the procedure seem benign to convince the public of the need to sterilize undesirable people for the common good of society.

¹⁸ Stern, *Eugenic Nation*, 84.

¹⁹ Stern, *Eugenic Nation*, 83.

²⁰ Stern, *Eugenic Nation*, 83.

²¹ Human Betterment Foundation, "Human Sterilization Today," (Pasadena, CA: Human Betterment Foundation, 1938), 2, <https://www.loc.gov/item/rbpe.0020380g/>.

²² Human Betterment Foundation, "Human Sterilization Today," 2.

²³ Human Betterment Foundation, "Human Sterilization Today," 2.

²⁴ Human Betterment Foundation, "Human Sterilization Today," 3.

The HBF, from what could be read in their pamphlets, did not outwardly single out racial groups, however, their advocacy of sterilization as a solution to society's maladies was adopted by white supremacists. Race-based eugenic sterilization appealed to white supremacists who saw people of color as an aberration and a threat to their society. Thus, racially targeted sterilization was used by white supremacists to exterminate racial minorities through the suppression, regulation, and termination of women of color's ability to reproduce.²⁵

Chicana Women in Los Angeles

Medical institutions served as the frontlines for California's 20th-century eugenic battles against women of color.²⁶ The doctors at Los Angeles County Medical Center (LACMC) sterilized Chicana women with coercion and deception tactics up to the 1970s.²⁷ These sterilizations were not unintentional, accidental, or medically required, instead, they were deliberate actions taken by the LACMC's medical staff to lower the birth rate of women of Mexican descent.²⁸ As explained in a 1969 document produced by The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) for physicians performing surgical sterilizations on women, "A Compendium of Policies and Legal Actions Pertinent to Female Sterilization," these doctors were empowered by the state to maim these women. The document states, "The organization contends that although good professional judgment will usually require that sterilization be discussed with both spouses, the doctor is nevertheless free to decide whether the operation is in this patient's best interest despite the spouse's

²⁵ Human Betterment Foundation, "Human Sterilization Today," 3.

²⁶ Elena R. Gutiérrez, *Fertile Matters: The Politics of Mexican-Origin Women's Reproduction* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008), 2.

²⁷ Gutiérrez, *Fertile Matters, The Politics of Mexican-Origin Women's Reproduction*, 2.

²⁸ Gutiérrez, *Fertile Matters*, 2.

objection.”²⁹ The state of California concurred with the ACOG guidelines and insisted that doctors use their good judgment to decide whether the patient should be operated on.³⁰ While the document from ACOG *recommends* discussing the procedure with the spouse, at the end of the day, the physician was considered the individual best situated to decide whether the patient should receive the operation and made the final call.³¹

In the ACOG guidelines there is no concern expressed to ensure that the patient is in the right mindset to consent without coercion.³² The vagueness of the ACOG guidelines allowed doctors at LACMC to coerce Chicana women into procedures that took away their reproductive autonomy. Coercive practices pressured half-conscious, drugged, and uninformed women to sign away their rights, which became commonplace. However, in the 1960s, The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) emphasized that signing a form did not constitute informed consent.³³ Instead, comprehensive methods of communication between the patient and the physician are baseline requirements for “informed consent.”³⁴ This idea of informed consent should have been a hallmark of any new guidelines issued by the ACOG. There must be a great emphasis on the choice of the women being operated on, and consent must be given when they are clear of mind, not when medications or the pains of their procedure are clouding their judgment. Unfortunately, even if the laws or ACOG

²⁹ The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, “Compendium of Policies and Legal Actions Pertinent to Female Sterilization” (Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA., 1969), 2.

³⁰ The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, “Compendium of Policies,” 2.

³¹ The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists “Compendium of Policies,” 2.

³² The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists “Compendium of Policies,” 2.

³³ Stacy Weiner, “What ‘Informed Consent’ Really Means,” AAMC, accessed May 18, 2023, <https://www.aamc.org/news-insights/what-informed-consent-really-means>.

³⁴ Weiner, “What ‘Informed Consent’ Really Means.”

regulations stipulated the necessity of consent and women's safety, there is no certainty that these laws would be implemented to protect women of color. In the hands of racist institutions, it is possible such care would only be applied to white women because their reproduction is seen as virtuous and beneficial to society.³⁵ Women of color were not seen as equal to white women and their reproduction was considered a societal problem that needed to be solved.³⁶ Doctors often tried to talk white middle-class women out of sterilization surgery, glaring evidence that the physicians racialized eugenic ideals exempted white women from their sterilization efforts and focused on Chicana women in the Los Angeles metropolitan area.³⁷

Several interests converged throughout the 1960s and 1970s to construct perceptions of Mexican women's supposed hyperfertility as problematic.³⁸ The state sought to fix issues of overpopulation that led, in their opinion, to the sapping of resources and state funds, meanwhile eugenics groups pushed for government action to stop further population growth because of their fears for their safety and the state of the environment.³⁹ In 1966 the American Medical Association (AMA) directed physicians to become more involved in the reproductive behavior of their patients and counsel them on matters of family planning, regardless of the physician's specialty.⁴⁰ The AMA commented directly on overpopulation by saying, "Only if the medical profession recognizes its opportunity and responsibility can it meet its clear obligation to help solve what is now widely regarded as the world's number one problem."⁴¹ Physicians were designated the responsibility to fix the supposed issue of overpopulation, and

³⁵ Gutiérrez, *Fertile Matters*, xi.

³⁶ Gutiérrez, *Fertile Matters*, xi.

³⁷ Gutiérrez, *Fertile Matters*, 38-39.

³⁸ Gutiérrez, *Fertile Matters*, 15.

³⁹ Gutiérrez, *Fertile Matters*, 18.

⁴⁰ Gutiérrez, *Fertile Matters*, 18.

⁴¹ Gutiérrez, *Fertile Matters*, 20.

served as tools of the state to enact the reproductive abuses seen in the LACMC.

Under the guidance of Dr. Edward James Quilligan (1925-2009), the hospital began pushing birth control to their female patients immediately. In this case, birth control meant widespread sterilization. Dr. Quilligan commented that he wanted his department “to show how low we can cut the birth rate of the Negro and Mexican populations in Los Angeles County.”⁴² The repeated act of forced or coercive sterilizations and other reproductive abuses on Chicana women at LACMC led to the civil case *Madrigal v. Quilligan* (1978).⁴³

Madrigal v. Quilligan

According to Virginia Espino, author of “‘Woman Sterilized As Gives Birth’: Forced Sterilization and Chicana Resistance in the 1970s,” the ten women represented in the 1978 civil suit stated that they were deceived, forced to sign the paperwork, and not given enough time to think about the surgery. They requested compensation for the irreversible surgery and assurances that hospitals provide better access to information for future patients.⁴⁴ Antonia Hernandez (b. 1948), one of the attorneys who represented the women, remarked that each victim belonged to an ethnic minority, was impoverished, and could not readily grasp English.⁴⁵ The patient’s inability to communicate in English allowed the doctors at LACMC to take advantage of them. This was one aspect of the coercive measures victims faced. Chicana activists claimed that the victim’s economic status, ethnicity, and immigrant background motivated physicians to recommend treatment based

⁴² Gutiérrez, *Fertile Matters*, 45.

⁴³ Virginia Espino, “‘Woman Sterilized As Gives Birth’: Forced Sterilization and Chicana Resistance in the 1970s,” ed. Vicki Ruíz, *Las Obreras: Chicana Politics of Work and Family*, 2000, 65.

⁴⁴ Espino, “‘Woman Sterilized As Gives Birth’: Forced Sterilization and Chicana Resistance in the 1970s,” 65.

⁴⁵ Espino, “‘Woman Sterilized As Gives Birth,’” 65.

on their own eugenic philosophy more than the patient's medical needs.⁴⁶ Furthermore, there were no written consent forms or documentation of the women's assent to the sterilization, which was carried out as women underwent emergency cesarean sections.⁴⁷

Espino explains that Dr. Bernard Rosenfeld, a resident physician, secretly observed women being cajoled, persuaded, and occasionally bullied into submitting to surgical sterilization.⁴⁸ Dr. Rosenfeld found that some physicians had deep-seated personal opinions about overpopulation amongst the undesirable races.⁴⁹ Others had strong views about class bias, and still, others thought that all welfare recipients should have their tubes tied.⁵⁰ One of the staff doctors instructed his resident by saying, "I don't care how old they are, remember everyone you get to get her tubes tied means less work for some poor son of a bitch next year."⁵¹ Dr. Rosenfeld gave Hernandez information on more than 180 cases where women were sterilized after delivery, most of whom had Spanish surnames.⁵² The doctors' behavior at LACMC highlights the fact eugenics was thriving in California as late as the 1970s, and had begun explicitly targeting women based on race rather than earlier criminal justifications, and caused Chicana women irreparable harm.

Hospital staff likely knew that if these women were aware of what was happening to them, they would have refused the sterilization. Along with the language barrier, they heavily medicated the women and manipulated them at their weakest moments to rob them of their biological capacity for reproduction. In many cases of these coercive sterilizations, hospital staff recommended the procedure in the late stages of labor after the

⁴⁶ Espino, "Woman Sterilized As Gives Birth," 65.

⁴⁷ Gutiérrez, *Fertile Matters*, 35.

⁴⁸ Espino, "Woman Sterilized As Gives Birth", 65-66.

⁴⁹ Espino, "Woman Sterilized As Gives Birth", 65-66.

⁵⁰ Espino, "Woman Sterilized As Gives Birth", 65-66.

⁵¹ Espino, "Woman Sterilized As Gives Birth", 68.

⁵² Espino, "Woman Sterilized As Gives Birth", 68.

women already received significant doses of sedatives and pain relievers such as Valium or Demerol.⁵³ While these women were under the influence of these drugs, they were then forced to sign consent papers for their sterilization while they were too disoriented to understand or notice.⁵⁴ Dr. Karen Benker of the LACMC, recalled that nearly every day, the doctor, holding a syringe, would ask the laboring mother whether she wanted pain medication, “Do you want the pain killer? Then sign the papers. Do you want the pain to stop? Do you want to have to go through this again? Sign the papers.”⁵⁵ The attempts at coercion highlight the power and influence these doctors had over women, particularly women of color.

Helena Orozco, one of the plaintiffs in the *Madrigal* case, said of her experience giving childbirth, “I just wanted them to leave me alone, sign the papers and get it over with...I was in pain on the table when they were asking me all those questions, and they were poking around my stomach, and pushing with their fingers up there. I just wanted to be left alone.”⁵⁶ When Orozco consented to the sterilization, she only did so because she believed she could later “untie” them, which was false.⁵⁷ Orozco mentioned that if she knew the surgery was permanent she would not have gone through with it, and only found out she was permanently infertile a year and a half after her surgery.⁵⁸ From the beginning of her time at the LACMC, Dolores Madrigal, the namesake of the civil case, rejected sterilization.⁵⁹ Physicians who sought to undermine her agency then spoke with Mr. Madrigal in another room and lied that his wife “would die if she had another child.”⁶⁰ In the words of Gutierrez, through “manipulative gender

⁵³ Gutiérrez, *Fertile Matters*, 41.

⁵⁴ Gutiérrez, *Fertile Matters*, 41.

⁵⁵ Gutiérrez, *Fertile Matters*, 41.

⁵⁶ Gutiérrez, *Fertile Matters*, 42.

⁵⁷ Gutiérrez, *Fertile Matters*, 42.

⁵⁸ Gutiérrez, *Fertile Matters*, 42.

⁵⁹ Gutiérrez, *Fertile Matters*, 42.

⁶⁰ Gutiérrez, *Fertile Matters*, 42.

dynamics” the hospital obtained consent from Mr. Madrigal, bypassing Dolores’ wishes.⁶¹ Physicians actively manipulated and misled their patients by falsely claiming that California state law only permitted three cesarean sections and that, as a result, sterilization was necessary after delivery. Maria Hurtado, another plaintiff in the case, recounted that her doctor brought an intimidating third person with him during their consultation, and asked her invasive questions about why she needed so many children.⁶² After giving birth, Hurtado received a tubal ligation surgery against her will and while incapacitated.⁶³ She did not find out that she was sterilized until her postpartum follow-up where the receptionist informed her, “Lady, forever you will not be able to have any more children.”⁶⁴

During the trial, lawyers for the plaintiffs called in Dr. Carlos Vélez, a Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, Los Angeles, who testified that procreation was “the core of social identity not only of the women, but interdependently it extends to Mexican males as well, in their ability to sire children.”⁶⁵ Dr. Vélez further highlighted the cultural significance since, according to him, Chicana women were recognized as valuable, in large part, because of their ability to bear children.⁶⁶ Many women experienced depression, difficulties in their marriages, and loss of social status due to their sterilization.⁶⁷ The court dismissed Dr. Vélez’s expertise with little consideration.⁶⁸ Judge Jesse W. Curtis (1905-2008), who oversaw the case, specifically questioned the need for a witness who specialized in Mexican culture, stating that any information that such a person could contribute would likely be self-evident.⁶⁹ Unsurprisingly,

⁶¹ Gutiérrez, *Fertile Matters*, 42.

⁶² Gutiérrez, *Fertile Matters*, 43.

⁶³ Gutiérrez, *Fertile Matters*, 43.

⁶⁴ Gutiérrez, *Fertile Matters*, 43.

⁶⁵ Gutiérrez, *Fertile Matters*, 47.

⁶⁶ Gutiérrez, *Fertile Matters*, 47.

⁶⁷ Gutiérrez, *Fertile Matters*, 47-48.

⁶⁸ Gutiérrez, *Fertile Matters*, 48.

⁶⁹ Gutiérrez, *Fertile Matters*, 48.

given his dismissal of Mexican culture, Judge Curtis sided with the physicians of the LACMC.

Judge Curtis reviewed each plaintiff's case individually and decided that the physicians acted in good faith and with each patient's knowledge and consent.⁷⁰ The judge of the *Madrigal* case ascribed the women's sterilization to a "communication failure" rather than unlawful action.⁷¹ The ruling, with no consideration for the insurmountable damage done to the women of the *Madrigal* case, showed that even women of color who were able to take their accused to court were easily dismissed. The state was not trying to better the lives of all Californians; they were ensuring the supremacy and superiority of the white race over all other races, which Quilligan's comments on cutting minority birth rates above clearly demonstrate. Doctors were the foot soldiers of the state's sterilization policy, largely free from oversight or consequence, likely emboldened by the *Madrigal v. Quilligan* ruling.

Native American Experience

Eugenicists in the federal government also targeted Native women across the country, contributing to the long history of discrimination and genocidal population control. Native families were singled out for family planning services by United States government employees, particularly those in the Indian Health Services (IHS), due to their high birth rate.⁷² In contrast to the median of 1.79 children for all populations in the United States, the 1970 census showed that the average Indian woman gave birth to 3.79 children.⁷³ The abuses suffered by Native American women across the country mimicked the experiences of Chicana women in California, demonstrating how California pioneered eugenic policy

⁷⁰ Gutiérrez, *Fertile Matters*, 49.

⁷¹ Gutiérrez, *Fertile Matters*, 49.

⁷² Jane Lawrence, "The Indian Health Service and the Sterilization of Native American Women," *American Indian Quarterly* 24, no. 3 (2000): 402.

⁷³ Lawrence, "The Indian Health Service and the Sterilization of Native American Women," 402.

for the nation. In another parallel to the fears of Chicana hyperfertility, the federal government enacted these policies out of fear of the booming Native population.⁷⁴ Therefore, to suppress their numbers, the sterilization of Native American women seemed an obvious solution. However, Native women were even easier targets for the federal government because it is functionally the overlord of Native people due to their non-existent representation in Congress and lack of sovereignty.⁷⁵

The federal government used its extensive, exhaustive, and near endless resources to impede the reproductive freedoms of Native women.⁷⁶ Through the Indian Health Service (IHS), the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW), and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Native nations became dependent on the federal government for their welfare and health, and ultimately allowed the government to successfully implement sterilization policies against Native women on their supposed sovereign land.⁷⁷ These federal agencies were directly involved in the reproductive abuse against Natives funded by the American taxpayers.⁷⁸

In 1965, with HEW approval, the IHS started offering family planning services to Native Americans.⁷⁹ These programs offered women the opportunity to learn about the various birth control options, including how they work, and how to use them.⁸⁰ The IHS was expected to help patients choose the most appropriate kind of contraception by informing them about various options such as spermicidal jelly and creams, the intrauterine device, sterilization, and the birth control pill.⁸¹

⁷⁴ Lawrence, "The Indian Health Service", 402.

⁷⁵ Lawrence, "The Indian Health Service," 402.

⁷⁶ Lawrence, "The Indian Health Service," 402.

⁷⁷ Sally J. Torpy, "Native American Women and Coerced Sterilization: On the Trail of Tears in the 1970s," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 24, no. 2 (January 1, 2000): 1.

⁷⁸ Torpy, "Native American Women and Coerced Sterilization," 1.

⁷⁹ Lawrence, "The Indian Health Service," 402.

⁸⁰ Lawrence, "The Indian Health Service," 402.

⁸¹ Lawrence, "The Indian Health Service," 402.

The attempts to curb the Native birth rate and population were so successful that they could be seen in the subsequent Census Reports of 1970 and 1980. According to the Bureau of the Census, The Apache Tribe decreased from 4.01 children in 1970 to 1.70 in 1980, and the average of all Native tribes went from 3.29 children to 1.30.⁸² These numbers reveal the efficacy of eugenic policy in decreasing the population of any race the government targets.⁸³ One of the decisive policies, The Family Planning Services and Population Research Act, enacted by Congress and signed by President Richard Nixon (1913-1994) in 1970, provided Medicaid and IHS patients with financial assistance for sterilizations.⁸⁴ After the Family Planning Act, sterilization rates sharply increased for Native women.⁸⁵ For instance, these operations doubled in the Navajo Nation between 1972 and 1978.⁸⁶ According to Brianna Theobald, a History professor at The University of Rochester, and author of *Reproduction on the Reservation: Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Colonialism in the Long Twentieth Century*, “Scholars estimate that beginning in 1970, physicians sterilized between 25 and 42 percent of Native women of childbearing age over a six-year period.”⁸⁷

The sterilizations of Native women irreparably harmed their roles in Native society, and Native ceremonies, and damaged the cohesion within the families of the women sterilized. For example, women are required to participate in religious rites among some Pueblo tribes, where a woman is defined as someone who has given birth.⁸⁸ Additionally, the Cree believe that if a

⁸² Lawrence, “The Indian Health Service,” 403.

⁸³ Lawrence, “The Indian Health Service,” 403.

⁸⁴ Brianna Theobald, *Reproduction on the Reservation: Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Colonialism in the Long Twentieth Century*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2019), 154.

⁸⁵ Theobald, *Reproduction on the Reservation: Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Colonialism in the Long Twentieth Century*, 153.

⁸⁶ Theobald, *Reproduction on the Reservation*, 154.

⁸⁷ Theobald, *Reproduction on the Reservation*, 1.

⁸⁸ Myla Vicenti Carpio, “The Lost Generation: American Indian Women and Sterilization Abuse,” *Social Justice* 31, no. 4 (2004): 42.

family produces fewer children than others, this family is making up for any wrongs that have been done.⁸⁹ Sterilizations also impacted the families and friends of the affected women; marriages broke up, and friendships drifted apart or stopped altogether.⁹⁰ Higher rates of marital issues, alcoholism, drug misuse, psychiatric issues, and feelings of shame and guilt continue to haunt Native women victimized by sterilization.⁹¹ According to the Women of All Red Nations (WARN), “the real issue behind sterilization is how we are losing our personal sovereignty”, and communities with high rates of sterilizations lost the respect of other tribal groups as a result of the tribe’s inability to safeguard Native American women.⁹²

Native American women, medical professionals, and Native periodicals like the “American Indian Journal” and *The Akwesasne Notes*, which was a newspaper issued by the Mohawk Nation in Akwesasne, whose territories bordered both New York and Canada, helped raise awareness of the abuse of sterilization.⁹³ Thanks to their advocacy, sterilization, and other issues within the IHS and public health system started to gain the attention of hospital workers and sterilized women.⁹⁴ The 1976 General Accounting Office (GAO) study ordered by South Dakota Senator James Abourezk (1931-2023) and Dr. Connie Uri, a Choctaw and Cherokee woman, began investigations into the abuses of sterilization procedures.⁹⁵ Dr. Uri became involved when one of her patients came to her and asked for a womb transplant; she notes:

⁸⁹ Carpio, “The Lost Generation: American Indian Women and Sterilization Abuse,” 45.

⁹⁰ Carpio, “The Lost Generation,” 45.

⁹¹ Lawrence, “The Indian Health Service,” 410.

⁹² Lawrence, “The Indian Health Service,” 411.

⁹³ “The Online Books Page,” Akwesasne Notes archives, <https://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/serial?id=akewsasnenotes>.

⁹⁴ Carpio, “The Lost Generation,” 42.

⁹⁵ Carpio, “The Lost Generation,” 42.

At first, I thought I had discovered a case of malpractice... There was no good reason for a doctor to perform a complete hysterectomy rather than a tubal ligation on a 20-year-old, healthy woman. I began accusing the government of genocide and insisted on a congressional investigation.⁹⁶

The patient, twenty-six at the time, was pressured by her primary doctor to be sterilized because according to the doctor, she was an alcoholic and thought that she should not reproduce.⁹⁷ Six years later, having dealt with her drinking problem with plans to marry, she mistakenly thought she could get a womb transplant, just like a kidney, however, she was unfortunately left sterile for the remainder of her life.⁹⁸ Dr. Uri was horrified by what the Native women experienced and saw a need for congressional oversight administered by the GAO.

The GAO investigation from 1976 concentrated on charges involving the Indian Health Service, but found none of the complaints were substantiated, and the only suggestion was a change in the regulations and processes of sterilization.⁹⁹ According to the GAO investigation report, published on November 23, 1976, there was no proof that IHS sterilized Indians without having a patient permission form on file.¹⁰⁰ However, the study itself was fundamentally flawed because GAO investigators disregarded claims of abuse stemming from coercive sterilization without consent.¹⁰¹ This deeply restricted the scope of the investigation by not considering the absence of a woman's consent to sterilization as evidence of malice by the doctors.

⁹⁶ Carpio, "The Lost Generation," 42.

⁹⁷ Carpio, "The Lost Generation," 42.

⁹⁸ Carpio, "The Lost Generation," 42.

⁹⁹ Carpio, "The Lost Generation," 45.

¹⁰⁰ Carpio, "The Lost Generation," 45.

¹⁰¹ Carpio, "The Lost Generation," 42-43.

Furthermore, GAO investigators neglected to speak with sterilized women or hospital workers.¹⁰² The investigators instead relied upon one published paper that utilized unsubstantiated eyewitness accounts of sterilizations on Native women.¹⁰³ With its congressional authority, the GAO could have efficiently collected the testimony of witnesses and gotten some answers with little effort on their part. Information about uninformed consent and involuntary sterilizations may have been revealed if these women had been interviewed.¹⁰⁴

These sterilizations brought irreparable harm to the families of the sterilized women while casting a shroud of shame on them and their perspective of Native nations and tribes. Furthermore, the dismissal of indigenous women's first-hand testimony and the disappointing conclusion of the GAO investigation mirrors the *Madrigal* court case's dismissal of Chicana women's experience.

African American Women

Sterilizations granted some southern whites new opportunities to assert their racial dominance after Jim Crow segregation ended.¹⁰⁵ An estimated 100,000 to 150,000 low-income women in the South were sterilized annually, and due to the severity and widespread nature of this abuse these procedures were given the popular euphemism of "Mississippi appendectomies."¹⁰⁶ Although the category of low-income is not racially determinative, Black women were often at the blade's end of the scalpel. Southern doctors employed a variety of tactics to assert their dominance

¹⁰² Carpio, "The Lost Generation," 45.

¹⁰³ Carpio, "The Lost Generation," 45.

¹⁰⁴ Carpio, "The Lost Generation," 45.

¹⁰⁵ Rebecca M. Kluchin, *Fit to Be Tied: Sterilization and Reproductive Rights in America, 1950-1980*, (NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2011), 93.

¹⁰⁶ Roberts, *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty*, 90-93.

over the Black community demanding equality.¹⁰⁷ The sterilizations that doctors conducted were usually not documented, which prevented women from directly relating the doctors' actions and medical procedures to the abuses of their bodies.¹⁰⁸ In other cases, patients were unaware they had even been violated for years, perhaps indefinitely.

The Relfs, a family of Black illiterate farmworkers from Montgomery, Alabama, made their way to the city and survived off relief payments totaling \$156 per month.¹⁰⁹ Among the six children in the family, the youngest Minnie Lee Relf, 14, and Mary Alice Relf, 12, were mentally underdeveloped and ultimately victims of coercive sterilization.¹¹⁰ When the younger Relf sisters needed renewed injections of the long-acting experimental contraceptive Depo-Provera in June 1973, nurses from the government-funded Montgomery Community Action Agency requested approval from the Relf family.¹¹¹ Mrs. Relf, unable to read or write, and presented with the forms regularly required for the Depo-Provera shots, signed the permission form with an "X."¹¹² However, the nurse administering the Depo-Provera believed these young girls' race, mental capacity, and impoverishment made them prime candidates for sterilization, leaving the Relfs to eventually discover that their daughters had been medically sterilized.¹¹³

After the Relfs' discovery, they turned to the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) to file a class action lawsuit in federal court that demanded a moratorium on government-funded sterilizations. The SPLC contended in *Relf v. Weinberger* (1974) that the federal government, under the direction of the Department

¹⁰⁷ Kluchin, *Fit to Be Tied: Sterilization and Reproductive Rights in America*, 93.

¹⁰⁸ Kluchin, *Fit to Be Tied*, 93-94.

¹⁰⁹ Roberts, *Killing the Black Body*, 93.

¹¹⁰ Roberts, *Killing the Black Body*, 93.

¹¹¹ Roberts, *Killing the Black Body*, 93.

¹¹² Roberts, *Killing the Black Body*, 93.

¹¹³ Roberts, *Killing the Black Body*, 93.

of Health, violated the Relf sisters' right to privacy guaranteed in the Due Process Clause under the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution.¹¹⁴ In its civil lawsuit, the SPLC stated that the court must order the United States to halt all further sterilizations until a constitutionally adequate standard for sterilization was set forward, but the consequential legal change was tempered by later appellate court rulings.¹¹⁵

According to Dorothy E. Roberts, a professor of Law and Sociology at The University of Pennsylvania, and author of *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty*, *Relf v. Weinberger* revealed the alarming extent of sterilizations throughout the South. In one prominent example, civil rights activist Fannie Lou Hamer (1917-1977) was involuntarily sterilized in 1961 at Sunflower City Hospital in Alabama, where she sought to have a uterine tumor removed.¹¹⁶ Teaching hospitals used impoverished Black women as living cadavers for their medical residents to practice on through unnecessary and unwanted hysterectomies.¹¹⁷ According to Fannie Lou Hamer, in an October 1970 *New York Times* article by June Jordan titled "Mississippi 'Black Home'":

The reason I would rather go to Mound Bayou if I take sick, is that women go up to that hospital [the white hospital in Ruleville] and be sterilized, without signing anything. And to be perfectly honest, see, I can give you medical proof: It happened to me. And it happened to so many others. This is nothing beautiful to say, but I want

¹¹⁴ "Relf v. Weinberger," Southern Poverty Law Center, Accessed September 28, 2022, 16, <https://www.splcenter.org/seeking-justice/case-docket/relf-v-weinberger>.

¹¹⁵ "Relf v. Weinberger," 21.

¹¹⁶ Roberts, *Killing the Black Body*, 90.

¹¹⁷ Roberts, *Killing the Black Body*, 90.

people to know what's going on. They [Black women] be sterilized without knowing it...."¹¹⁸

June Jordan chronicled her journey throughout Mississippi and the struggles Black people suffered from the scars of Jim Crow laws and segregation; it demonstrated that actionable knowledge of the abuses available to the public at the time. While Mound Bayou was known to be a haven for Black people, an uneven dirt road made the journey potentially hazardous for someone with a medical emergency, despite this Fannie Lou Hamer urged African Americans to make the trip to Mound Bayou.¹¹⁹ Hamer emphasized that the hospital in Ruleville sterilized her without her consent and made it her mission to inform people of the uninformed sterilizations in government hospitals.

Despite the fact that hysterectomies - the removal of a woman's entire uterus - resulted in a twenty times higher risk of death, surgeons were financially motivated to conduct them because Medicaid priced them at \$800.¹²⁰ In contrast, a tubal ligation, a safer and less invasive option with similar results, was priced at only \$250.¹²¹ The indifference towards Black women by the authorities demonstrates that they viewed Black women as more of an object, and at best sub-humans that needed their populations controlled.

The Social Security Act of 1935 created the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) grant program that allowed states to offer cash welfare benefits for underprivileged children who had been denied parental support or care because their father or mother was absent, ill, sick, or unemployed.¹²² The inclusion of

¹¹⁸ June Jordan, "Mississippi 'Black Home'," (The New York Times, October 11, 1970), <https://www.nytimes.com/1970/10/11/archives/mississippi-Black-home-a-sweet-and-bitter-bluesong-mississippi.html>.

¹¹⁹ Jordan, "Mississippi 'Black Home'".

¹²⁰ Roberts, *Killing the Black Body*, 90.

¹²¹ Roberts, *Killing the Black Body*, 90.

¹²² "Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) - Overview," ASPE (Office of The Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation), accessed December 09, 2022,

Black families in such social welfare programs, previously only available to Whites, was quickly vilified as evidence of dependency and Black people's lack of a work ethic and social degradation.¹²³ The previous perception of a virtuous White widow was rapidly replaced by the supposedly immoral Black welfare queen as the standard stereotype of the welfare mother.¹²⁴ As these progressive welfare reforms were linked with Black women, already stigmatized as careless, irresponsible, and too fertile, the AFDC was gradually burdened with behavior modification guidelines, employment restrictions, and lower adequate benefit levels.¹²⁵ This explicitly tied Black women, already marginalized and disliked by many White Americans, to taxpayer dollars emphasizing the fear of Black women siphoning off public money. However, this concern for public funds shrouded their racist and eugenic intentions to control women of color's bodies and repress their reproduction.

Population Control Through Racial Lawfare

Beyond direct sterilization, which ultimately fell out of fashion along with outright eugenic policy, the state attempted other more subtle methods of population control for those deemed undesirable. New Jersey was the first state to implement a family cap provision in 1992.¹²⁶ The term family cap is misleading and could be more appropriately referred to as a child exclusion provision. A family's welfare payment often increased by a predetermined amount upon the birth of a new child; the family cap provision denied the increase if the child was born after acquiring welfare.¹²⁷ These provisions made no exception for birth caused by rape, incest, or

<https://aspe.hhs.gov/aid-families-dependent-children-afdc-temporary-assistance-needy-families-tanf-overview>.

¹²³ Roberts, *Killing the Black Body*, 212.

¹²⁴ Roberts, *Killing the Black Body*, 207.

¹²⁵ Roberts, *Killing the Black Body*, 207.

¹²⁶ Roberts, *Killing the Black Body*, 210.

¹²⁷ Roberts, *Killing the Black Body*, 210.

failed contraception.¹²⁸ In other words, a mother receiving welfare for one child with a second child cannot include the second child for calculating benefit levels, while a mother applying for welfare for the first time with two children can include both.¹²⁹

New Jersey required federal approval to implement the family cap provision because the exclusion conflicted with federal AFDC eligibility standards.¹³⁰ The Social Security Act of 1935, which authorized the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) to waive necessary compliance with federal guidelines for experimental projects that promote the act's objectives to care for needy children and to strengthen their families, was used to skirt these AFDC standards.¹³¹ With the federal government's approval of the New Jersey family cap provision, similar policies were adopted by multiple states and Congress aimed to implement similar changes to welfare nationwide.

In 1996, President Bill Clinton (b.1946) signed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, which, along with a federal family cap provision, included The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant system that completely overhauled the AFDC welfare system for the worse giving more power to individual states.¹³² The TANF regulations placed a five-year lifetime limit on cash assistance and prohibited unmarried parents from acquiring it.¹³³ Clinton's legislation also limited welfare benefits for noncitizens, including requirements

¹²⁸ Roberts, *Killing the Black Body*, 210.

¹²⁹ Roberts, *Killing the Black Body*, 211.

¹³⁰ Roberts, *Killing the Black Body*, 211.

¹³¹ Roberts, *Killing the Black Body*, 211.

¹³² Congress.gov, "H.R.3734 - 104th Congress (1995-1996): Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996," August 22, 1996. <http://www.congress.gov/>.

¹³³ Gene Falk, "The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant: A Legislative History," Congressional Research Service reports, November 22, 2022, <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/>, 6.

that noncitizens must reside in the country for five years to become eligible for TANF, demonstrating a racial slant to the legislation.¹³⁴

Congress also made it clear that its welfare reform initiatives paid particular attention to issues in the Black community. To support the necessity for its policies, the House Republicans' Contract with America referred to the growing numbers of fatherless children amongst the Black population. House Speaker Newt Gingrich (b.1943) blamed Black people's poverty on their apathy while pushing this Contract with America.¹³⁵ It noted that a young Black man's chances of engaging in criminal activity roughly quadrupled if they were raised without a father and tripled if he lived in an area with a high concentration of single-parent homes.¹³⁶

The House Republican rhetoric about the behavior of the Black community is not based on any legitimate study. In the eyes of House Republicans like Gingrich, dependency only happens when a woman of color asks for help. Conservatives' long-term reliance on family wealth, life insurance earnings, government agriculture subsidies, and Social Security payments are not similarly condemned. When rich white people get tax cuts on their enormous wealth, it is not a form of welfare, when white farmers get government subsidies on their corn harvest, it is not considered welfare. They do not consider this kind of financial help as a dependency.¹³⁷ Yet, if a Black mother requests financial and material aid from the government it is conditional, and they are often labeled as lazy or the derogatory Welfare Queen. She is then penalized if she is a single mother and has additional children by the new TANF laws, so she is not easily tempted to increase the supposed economic burden on the government and maintain her eligibility.

¹³⁴ Falk, "The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant: A Legislative History," 6.

¹³⁵ Roberts, *Killing the Black Body*, 215.

¹³⁶ Roberts, *Killing the Black Body*, 215.

¹³⁷ Roberts, *Killing the Black Body*, 220.

Conclusion

Women of color in particular have been subjected to a variety of reproductive abuses and manipulation designed to marginalize their reproductive rights and control their populations. California was a pioneer in the eugenic movement, one of the first to craft eugenic legislation in 1909. However, these initial laws in California targeted not women of color, but incarcerated mentally challenged individuals for sterilization to supposedly protect the public from the convicts' assumed sexual deviance. White supremacists quickly caught onto the eugenic rhetoric's ability to control women of color's reproduction, and thus the overall minority population, and then justified racist policy to supposedly protect the majority white population. Doctors at the LACMC sterilized Chicana women without their consent and evaded responsibility in court. Native women were also a target of systematic reproductive abuses. The federal government utilized the Indian Health Service (IHS), the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW), and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to sterilize Native women without their consent, resulting in a significant drop in census numbers of the indigenous populations in the following decades.¹³⁸ Black women, longtime victims of American white supremacy and sexual violence, did not escape similar reproductive abuses such as sterilization. Black women's reproductive activity was also regulated through targeted welfare stipulations. The systematic reproductive abuses that these women of color were subjected to share many similarities in method, outcome, and motive.

All the women mentioned were tricked and manipulated into sterilizations that took away their reproductive autonomy. Their reproduction was seen as a problem putting too much burden on the welfare system. However, the concern for public safety often professed as the motivation for discriminatory policies, hid politician's racist intentions. By suppressing people of color's

¹³⁸ Torpy, "Native American Women and Coerced Sterilization," 1.

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ability to reproduce, and asserting authority over the bodies of Chicana, Black, and Indigenous women, systematic reproductive abuse continued the United States' unfortunate history of state-sanctioned racial discrimination.

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Author Bio

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The Double-Edged Sword: Examining the Contradictory Nature of SAVAK and The U.S.-Iran Client Relationship

By Braedon McGhee

Abstract: The Iranian Revolution of 1979 marked the end of the diplomatic relationship between Iran and the United States. This relationship, cultivated by the United States throughout the Cold War, served the interests of the United States' hegemonic quest to contain communism while also appealing to the Shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's political goals. This paper analyzes the complex and contradictory nature of the U.S.-Iran relationship during the reign of the Shah, specifically focusing on the role of the Shah's brutal secret police force Sâzemân-e Ettelâ'ât va Amniat-e Kešvar (SAVAK), created, directed, and funded by the United States to consolidate the Shah's regime. Using Mark J. Gasiorowski's framework of client-state relationships, this paper argues that SAVAK embodied the inherent contradictions of the autonomous state (autonomous from their people) and that its bloody tactics of repression are primarily responsible for the ultimate downfall of the Shah's regime - enabled by the United States.

Introduction: An Island of Stability

From 1953 to 1979, Iran's subservience was one of the United States' most valuable assets in the Middle East. Iran fulfilled the United States' vital national security interests during the Cold War (1947-1991), the containment of communism.¹ Given Iran's geographic location, just southwest of the Soviet Union, the state

¹ Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States: 1492-Present* Harper Perennial (1990), 448.

was used as a bulwark against Soviet and communist influence. The Truman Doctrine (1947) set a precedent for the United States' Cold War policy, which asserted that the United States would aid any country in threat of potential communist influence and intended to limit the Soviet Union's sphere of influence.² Though the United States often claimed that containment of the Soviet Union and communism necessarily enhanced democratic and liberal practices, the means employed (as demonstrated in this paper) often involved covert operations, the support of insurgencies, and the stifling of democratic processes in foreign countries.³ All of these are evident when examining the relations between the United States and Iran from 1953 to 1979.

The United States installed and propped up a sympathetic leader, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi (1919-1980), as the Shah, who in turn employed any means necessary to solidify his throne and advance Washington D.C.'s national security interest, alienating and repressing the Iranian people. The most useful tool in this repression was a Gestapo-like security organization—*Sâzemân-e Ettelâ'ât va Amniyat-e Kešvar* (SAVAK)—an unnatural hybrid monstrosity that ultimately undermined the dual interests it served, neither of them the Iranian people. Amnesty International reported in 1974 “no country in the world has a worse record in human rights than Iran” under the Shah's rule.⁴ Yet, only three years later, on New Year's Eve of 1977, United States President Jimmy Carter (b. 1924) met with the Shah of Iran as a testament to the well-established relationship between the two countries. President Carter, accompanied by his wife Rosalynn (b. 1927), enjoyed an elaborate dinner with Mohammad Reza Pahlavi and his wife Farah

² Harry Truman, “Truman Doctrine (1947),” National Archives and Records Administration (National Archives and Records Administration, March 12, 1947), <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/truman-doctrine>

³ Zinn, *A People's History of the United States: 1492-Present*, 440.

⁴ Amnesty International, Annual Report, 1974-1975, p. 8; Amnesty International, Amnesty International Briefing: Iran (November 1976), pp. 2-5; Butler and Levasseur, *Human Rights and the Legal System in Iran*.

Pahlavi (b. 1938).⁵ Despite reports like Amnesty International's, President Carter and the United States media hailed the Shah as a liberal reformer on track to transform Iran into a secular state that mirrored Western ideals.⁶

In retrospect, Carter's toast is remembered as one of his greatest diplomatic blunders. As Carter raised a glass to honor his host, the Shah. With his stomach full of all the luxuries typical of a royal Pahlavi feast, Carter stated, "Iran, because of the great leadership of the Shah, is an island of stability in one of the more troubled areas of the world."⁷ While the United States (and the Carter Administration) praised the Shah's leadership, the Shah's security apparatus *Sâzemân-e Ettelâ'ât va Amniat-e Kešvar* (SAVAK), funded and created by the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), worked hard to manufacture a cult of fear through the torture and surveillance of every day Iranian people.⁸ Along with the CIA, Israel's intelligence agency MOSSAD also assisted, enabled, and enhanced SAVAK's repressive capabilities.⁹

Considering the Shah's brutal track record of human rights abuses, Carter's toast symbolized the commitment of the United States government to turn a blind eye to its client states' actions as long as that state continued to advance the United States' national security interests. A good relationship with the Shah also served Carter's hopes of securing peace talks between Israel and Egypt, putting an end to the decades of war between Israel and

⁵ Jimmy Carter, "Tehran, Iran Toasts of the President and the Shah at a State Dinner," Tehran, Iran Toasts of the President and the Shah at a State Dinner. | The American Presidency Project, December 31, 1977, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/tehran-iran-toasts-the-president-and-the-shah-state-dinner>

⁶ Jimmy Carter, "Tehran, Iran Toasts of the President and the Shah at a State Dinner."

⁷ Carter, "Tehran, Iran Toasts of the President and the Shah at a State Dinner."

⁸ Carter, "Tehran, Iran Toasts of the President and the Shah at a State Dinner."

⁹ Mike Wallace, Open Source Transcript, "CIA's Role in Forming SAVAK," Published by CBS Network, Released by the Central Intelligence Agency, Maryland: March 2, 1980.

neighboring countries since the establishment of the state in 1948.¹⁰ Yet, even while praising the Shah from one side of his mouth, President Carter knew he could not ignore the reality of the Shah's autocratic rule. In the same speech, Carter read a quote from one of Iran's great poets, Saadi Shirazi (1210-1292):

Human beings are like parts of a body, created from the same essence. When one part is hurt and in pain, others cannot remain in peace and quiet. If the misery of others leaves you indifferent and with no feeling of sorrow, then you cannot be called a human being.¹¹

With this statement, Carter subtly directed the Shah to look inward at his rule and begin reform. The Shah was responsible for a litany of heinous crimes, including political repression, kidnapping, torture, and many more, discussed further in this paper. SAVAK was instrumental in carrying out these human rights violations at the Shah's demand with CIA instruction and assistance.¹²

Despite, or, as this paper argues, because of the repressive capabilities of the Shah's state, what Carter termed an island of stability in 1978 was wracked by the Islamic Revolution a year later, which brought Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (1900-1989), out of exile and into power. By all measures, the Shah's oppression of his people is to blame for the Iranian Revolution; however, the aid given by the United States made the Shah's regime far more capable of taking oppressive action. Moreover, the Shah's security organization, SAVAK, served both the United States and the Shah's interests within Iran. Therefore, this vessel of repression is a physical manifestation (or embodiment) of the relationship's unnatural and contradictory elements deserving of research. The following demonstrates the role SAVAK played in consolidating

¹⁰ Carter, "Tehran, Iran Toasts of the President and the Shah at a State Dinner."

¹¹ Carter, "Tehran, Iran Toasts of the President and the Shah at a State Dinner."

¹² Mike Wallace, Open Source Transcript, "CIA's Role in Forming SAVAK."

the Shah's regime, the methods of which subsequently undermined both the Shah's and the United States' goals in Iran.

Historical Background

Mark J. Gasiorowski's 1991 book *United States Foreign Policy and The Shah: Building a Client State in Iran* provides the framework this research expands on. Gasiorowski explores what he termed the U.S.-Iran cliency relationship, stating that such relationships are problematic by their very nature and, for that reason, produce shortsighted decisions by both actors.¹³ These cliency relationships inevitably fail because the client state becomes highly autonomous from their own people's political pressure and needs, leading to revolt. Gasiorowski notes that this is not the intended goal of this relationship but a consequence of the patron's attempt to secure a politically stable environment within the client state.¹⁴ Gasiorowski's theory and established characteristics of the U.S.-Iran cliency relationship are implemented in this study by examining SAVAK's role in such a relationship, concluding that it is ultimately most responsible for the Iranian Revolution of 1979.

Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's oppressive rule of Iran leading up to the Iranian Revolution is well documented by works like Ervand Abrahamian's 1982 book *Iran Between Two Revolutions* and the 2008 *A History of Modern Iran*, as well as Gholam Reza Afkhami's 2008 book *The Life and Times of the Shah*. However, little research has been done on the Shah's intelligence agency's role in enhancing the Shah's autonomy from his people through the U.S.-Iran cliency relationship. However, information on SAVAK's actions during the Shah's rule is limited because of the clandestine nature of the organization itself; much of the information gathered on SAVAK's covert actions rely on former members' admissions, victim testimonials, and cross-analysis of declassified CIA

¹³ Mark J. Gasiorowski, *United States. Foreign Policy and the Shah: Building a Client State in Iran* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 1991), 8.

¹⁴ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 2.

documents. Without these accounts, the dystopian nature of SAVAK would remain largely unknown. The Iranian revolutionaries who overtook the U.S. embassy in 1979 uncovered shredded CIA documents, later published in *The True Nature of The Great Satan*, which exposed SAVAK's expansive liaison network within Iran and its collaboration with foreign intelligence agencies such as the CIA and MOSSAD.

The Cliency Relationship

According to Mark Gasiorowski, a cliency relationship is a mutually beneficial security-based relationship between two countries that differ greatly in wealth, power, and size.¹⁵ The patron country, the larger and more powerful of the two, seeks to ensure political stability within the client state, the weaker country, and provides assistance through infrastructure support, military aid, and intelligence aid to protect its national security interests.¹⁶ In order to ensure political stability within a client state, the patron country typically aids the client's repressive abilities, including domestic police forces, security forces, and intelligence networks, all aimed at silencing political opposition, which enables the client state to become autonomous.¹⁷ Key to Gasiorowski's theory of the "highly autonomous state," is that the client is not autonomous from the patron or other states but rather from the needs and pressures of its very own citizens.¹⁸ This means that the client state can act without representing its own citizens, which creates a disenfranchised class that leads to revolt.¹⁹ It is the contradictory nature of cliency relationships that is their undoing, and the client states autonomy that seals the regime's own fate.

The United States pursued such a relationship with Iran during the Cold War because Iran's geographical location was

¹⁵ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 2.

¹⁶ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 3.

¹⁷ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 9-10.

¹⁸ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 9.

¹⁹ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 9.

deemed crucial to the interests of the Dulles brothers. Allen Dulles (1893-1969), former Director of the CIA, along with his brother John Foster Dulles (1888-1959) as Secretary of State, drove United States foreign policy during most of the Eisenhower Administration (1953-1961). The Dulles' hardline anti-communist stance informed, what they called, the perimeter defense strategy intended to limit Soviet expansion.²⁰ Their close connections to the business world—especially to the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, which the Dulles brothers helped form as lawyers for the corporate law firm Sullivan & Cromwell—likely informed or coincidentally dovetailed with their calls for containment.²¹ In line with Gasiorowski's theory, SAVAK and the United States then heightened the Shah's autonomy and crushed democratic systems or open opposition, which created the conditions for revolt.

SAVAK: *Clidency Theory In Action*

In 1953, The United States assisted in overthrowing the democratically elected prime minister of Iran, Mohammad Mossadegh (1882-1967), with the help of the newly established Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).²² Mossadegh attempted to nationalize Iranian oil to undo Great Britain's imperialist ownership of Iran's oil reserves. However, it wasn't just a stake in Iranian oil that inspired the United States to overthrow Mossadegh; the British government's propaganda campaign painted Mossadegh as a communist-Soviet puppet which spurred the CIA to action.²³ Mossadegh's popularity came from his nationalist appeal and

²⁰ James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion the Tragedy of American-Iranian Relations* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 113.

²¹ Intervention in other countries' affairs became the United States status quo; to name a few incidents Guatemala in 1954, Indonesia 1957, the Congo in 1960, Chile in 1973. Each of these interventions resulted in the unnecessary deaths of civilians and subsequent authoritative rule of whichever puppet leader the United States saw as fit. Vijay Prashad, *Washington Bullets*, (LeftWord Books, 2020), 14.

²² Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 82.

²³ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 83.

commitment to the Iranian middle class, characterized by Gasiorowski as “One of Iran’s few honest politicians.”²⁴ It should be noted that Mossadegh never advocated for an economic model in which the means of production are held in common; Mossadegh’s primary goal was to release Great Britain’s imperial grip on Iranian oil, but this propaganda campaign successfully played on the Eisenhower Administration’s willingness to intervene wherever it feared Soviet expansion or communist tendencies.²⁵ The Iranian coup of 1953 successfully ousted Mohammad Mossadegh and solidified the U.S.-backed Mohammad Reza Pahlavi’s position on the throne.²⁶

The primary goal of the United States was to secure its global hegemonic interests, done via an Iranian puppet state, and that required the Shah to remain in power to keep a politically stable and Western-oriented Iran on the Soviet border.²⁷ The United States-backed regime in Iran also ensured European markets continued to benefit from Iran’s large oil supply, which likewise promoted stability against communist encroachment in the post-World War II world.²⁸ The United States assisted its client with military aid, infrastructure development, and, most importantly, intelligence, which led to the creation of the Shah’s infamous *Sâzemân-e Ettelâ’ât va Amniat-e Kešvar* (SAVAK) in 1957.²⁹ Nicknamed the Shah’s eyes, SAVAK’s depravity became a center of attention for human rights organizations such as Amnesty International.³⁰ The United States developed SAVAK as a mirror of its own intelligence agencies, the CIA and FBI, which had direct

²⁴ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 58.

²⁵ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 82.

²⁶ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 82.

²⁷ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 83.

²⁸ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 83.

²⁹ Ervand Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 126.

³⁰ Amnesty International, *Annual Report, 1974-1975*, p. 8.

contact with the Shah and trained SAVAK personnel.³¹ Though the Shah was initially offered two separate intelligence branches to mirror the CIA and FBI, he opted for one singular branch.³²

SAVAK enhanced the Shah's autonomy from regular Iranians through repressive and violent action (which will be examined in more detail later), but this did not lead to a politically stable environment.³³ The ultimate instability was a product of the Shah's oppressive regime and its comprehensive intelligence network that harshly marginalized dissent.³⁴ According to the revolutionaries that stormed the United States embassy and took several American diplomats hostage in 1979, the Shah no longer served his people and was merely an imperial tool of the United States,

The Muslim revolutionaries of Iran considered it their utmost responsibility to occupy the Den of Espionage and confiscate its property and documents (to expose) the role the US Embassy played in acts of sabotage and intrigue in Iran- and all acts of injustice and oppression committed by the U.S. in Iran and all over the world.³⁵

As noted earlier by those directly involved in the storming of the embassy, the revolution's primary goal was to rid Iran of foreign intervention, namely by the United States, recognized for manufacturing the Shah's repressive capabilities. The very methods and organs of control the Shah and the United States

³¹ Mark Asnad, "How CIA, Mossad Helped Form SAVAK," Iranian Revolution Documents Center (irdc.ir, November 11, 2016), <https://irdc.ir/en/news/26/how-cia-mossad-helped-form-savak>

³² Asnad, "How CIA, Mossad Helped Form SAVAK."

³³ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 118.

³⁴ *The True Nature of the U.S Regime, the "Great Satan."* (Tehran, 1984), 67.

³⁵ *The True Nature of the U.S Regime, the "Great Satan,"* 64.

relied on to ensure his autonomy over his people backfired tremendously, alienating his citizens en masse.³⁶

SAVAK's Origins

By the time the United States successfully overthrew Mohammad Mossadegh in late 1953, the Iranian military had already established a liaison with the CIA.³⁷ The CIA cultivated a prototype of *Sâzemân-e Ettelâ'ât va Amniat-e Kešvar* (SAVAK) through the training of a particular branch of the Iranian military intelligence establishment led by General Teimur Bakhtiar (1914-1970), a devout anti-communist and thus a natural fit for the Eisenhower Administration.³⁸ Originally the intelligence branch had a far more limited scope; however, United States officials urged the Shah to expand the branch's purview to safeguard his throne.³⁹

The establishment of a well-funded and trained intelligence agency served both parties of the U.S.-Iran cliency relationship.⁴⁰ SAVAK expanded the Shah's natural lust for power, and this served the United States who depended on Iran to remain within the "Western camp" to oppose the Soviet Union.⁴¹ Teimur Bakhtiar was then named chief of SAVAK and was considered the second most powerful man within Iran.⁴² However, Bakhtiar plotted against the Shah and was ultimately forced to flee the

³⁶ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 152.

³⁷ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 91.

³⁸ Asnad, "How CIA, Mossad Helped Form SAVAK."

³⁹ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 117.

⁴⁰ Nikki Ragozin Keddie and Mark J. Gasiorowski, *Neither East nor West: Iran, the Soviet Union, and the United States* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 154.

⁴¹ Eitan Meisels, "The Shah's 'Fatherly Eye'" April 13, 2020, 8.

⁴² Hyun Sang Yoo, "An Analysis of United States Security Policy towards a Third World State during the Cold War Era : Case Study of US-Iran Relations," British Library EThOS - Search and order theses online (Durham University, January 1, 1996), <https://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?uin=uk.bl.ethos.295685>

country in the early 1960s.⁴³ Replaced by Ali Amini (1905-1991) as chief of SAVAK, Bakhtiar lived the rest of his life in exile and died in a supposed “hunting accident” in 1970.⁴⁴ There is general consensus that SAVAK orchestrated Bakhtiar’s death.⁴⁵

SAVAK’s first goal after its consolidation was to take control of the Shah’s most formidable opposition, the Tudeh party. Created in 1941, the party concerned not only the Shah but also the United States due to its ties to the Soviet Union, and Washington then further increased its assistance to the Shah and SAVAK.⁴⁶ The Tudeh party was made up mainly of the middle-working class of Iran, which meant the Shah would have to take oppressive action against a large portion of the state.⁴⁷ SAVAK did not hesitate and quickly implemented repressive tactics against the working class of Iran, Tudeh members lost their jobs, and many were imprisoned.⁴⁸ Imprisoned Tudeh members were kept for unspecified amounts of time and typically tortured to gather information.⁴⁹ Torture quickly became one of the most infamous characteristics of SAVAK (which will be detailed later) that stifled the Shah’s opponents.⁵⁰

SAVAK’s campaigns of media infiltration began in tandem with the assault against the Tudeh Party. SAVAK published an abundance of false rumors about the Tudeh party, including one claim that the Tudeh was behind the coup of Mossadegh.⁵¹ Despite the irony of SAVAK’s cultivation by Washington D.C., and the CIA’s role in the overthrow of Mossadegh, SAVAK was able to manipulate public opinion against the Tudeh. Ultimately, after the

⁴³ Yoo, “An Analysis of United States Security Policy towards a Third World State during the Cold War Era,” 299.

⁴⁴ Yoo, “An Analysis of United States Security Policy towards a Third World State during the Cold War Era,” 299.

⁴⁵ Yoo, “An Analysis of United States Security Policy towards a Third World State during the Cold War Era,” 299.

⁴⁶ Meisels, “The Shah’s ‘Fatherly Eye,’” 9.

⁴⁷ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 176.

⁴⁸ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 451.

⁴⁹ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 451.

⁵⁰ Meisels, “The Shah’s ‘Fatherly Eye,’” 16.

⁵¹ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 452.

organization had either imprisoned, tortured, murdered, or simply scared members of the Tudeh party, the group lost its influence in Iran.⁵² The U.S.-Iran cliency relationship depended on political stability within Iran, and the fall of the Tudeh was just one of the first steps the Shah took in order to create a regime that could not be challenged.

The Characteristics of “The Shah’s Eyes”

The Shah’s complete security apparatus consisted of SAVAK, the national police, the Gendarmerie, and the Armed Forces. Of these, SAVAK proved to be the most effective and secured his domination of the domestic sphere of Iran.⁵³ At its peak, *Sâzemân-e Ettelâ’ât va Amniat-e Kešvar* (SAVAK) employed around 7,000 full-time staff and about 20,000-40,000 part-time informants.⁵⁴

The agency was organized into eight different departments. The first department was the administration department, run by the director of SAVAK, who reported directly to the Shah.⁵⁵ The foreign operations department handled all overseas intelligence gathering operations that involved cooperation with the CIA and MOSSAD.⁵⁶ Department three was SAVAK’s domestic security department, by far the most infamous of all the departments.⁵⁷ Department seven, the covert operations department, according to Alimardan Azimpour, a former SAVAK member, “dealt with Middle Eastern affairs which were controlled by Israel’s MOSSAD.”⁵⁸ Two more departments were added that covered training and a central records department that kept files on every targeted Iranian.⁵⁹ The Royal Intelligence Organization, controlled

⁵² Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 452.

⁵³ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 152.

⁵⁴ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 154.

⁵⁵ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 153.

⁵⁶ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 153.

⁵⁷ IRI Center, “SAVAK: Fathered by the CIA - YouTube,” August 19, 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qau-V9-0_vc 7:41.

⁵⁸ IRI Center, “SAVAK: Fathered by the CIA 7:41.

⁵⁹ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 154.

by the Shah, supervised all of these departments.⁶⁰ Furthermore, while SAVAK was supposedly under the direct supervision of the Prime Minister, an already weakened position following the 1953 coup, the Shah's routine meetings with the director of SAVAK undermined the Prime Minister's claims or ability to control SAVAK.⁶¹

With United States aid and instruction, the Shah unleashed SAVAK to its full potential, and the organization infiltrated nearly every aspect of Iranian daily life. The domestic security department of SAVAK, or department three, was the most capable at this task.⁶² The department first set out to monitor and arrest any suspected Marxist, specifically members of the Tudeh party.⁶³ Soon after the Tudeh party was neutralized, the third department branched out to target every potential opposition force within Iran.⁶⁴ To do this effectively, the third department split into four separate branches.⁶⁵ The first branch carried out investigations of key opposition groups, such as the Tudeh and The National Front, a political stronghold of Mossadeghists representing the middle class.⁶⁶ Branch two covered public institutions and public opinion, oversight of SAVAK's infiltration of Iranian media.⁶⁷ Branch three focused on keeping records of domestic security interests, and the

⁶⁰ IRI Center, "SAVAK: Fathered by the CIA - YouTube," 7:55.

⁶¹ "WikiLeaks," The Global Intelligence Files - [MESA] Pre-Comment: Intelligence Services, Part 2: Iranian strategies of internal stability, external destabilization and deception, April 5, 2010, https://wikileaks.org/gifiles/docs/10/105055_-mesa-pre-comment-intelligence-services-part-2-iranian.html

⁶² "JPRS ID: 9523 USSR Report Political and ... - Cia.gov," February 4, 1981, <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP82-00850R000300080006-4.pdf> 15.

⁶³ Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 452.

⁶⁴ Gholam R. Afkhami, *The Life and Times of the Shah* (Berkeley, CA: Univ. of California Press, 2009), 382.

⁶⁵ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 153.

⁶⁶ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 153.

⁶⁷ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 153.

final branch was used for nebulous “specialized activities” such as indoctrination.⁶⁸

Department three, or the domestic security department, employed ten percent of SAVAK employees, or 300 in total, and carried out an advanced infiltration campaign throughout Iranian society.⁶⁹ For example, department three planted members into popular labor unions to search for any form of “collectivist ideology.”⁷⁰ In practice, the term’s ambiguity allowed members to imprison suspects with little to no evidence. Illegitimate imprisonment became one of the many tools SAVAK used to install fear into Iranian society; it is estimated that in 1976 alone, there were between 25,000-100,000 political prisoners within Iran.⁷¹ The Iranian state justified the organization’s heinous record and activity when the Shah approved a 1957 bill that granted SAVAK the authority of “military magistrates,” which essentially wiped its slate clean of any liability.⁷² The virtual impunity granted by the Shah encouraged SAVAK to take any measure necessary, however brutal, to ensure the opposition was not capable of any serious political threat.

Compounding the injustice of arrest and imprisonment on flimsy politically motivated charges, SAVAK also infiltrated Iran’s judicial system to ensure that anyone who opposed the Shah would not receive a fair trial.⁷³ Trials were conducted by military tribunals rather than an impartial authority, and victims were

⁶⁸ The National Front, “A Portion of The Secrets of the Security Organization SAVAK,” 1971. The National Front, “Portion of the Secrets.”

⁶⁹ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 153.

⁷⁰ Yoo, “An Analysis of United States Security Policy towards a Third World State during the Cold War Era,” 291.

⁷¹ Yoo, “An Analysis of United States Security Policy towards a Third World State during the Cold War Era,” 291.

⁷² Yoo, “An Analysis of United States Security Policy towards a Third World State during the Cold War Era,” 291.

⁷³ Yoo, “An Analysis of United States Security Policy towards a Third World State during the Cold War Era,” 291.

typically arrested on purposefully vague charges and laws.⁷⁴ Defendants at these tribunals were not afforded the right to a jury, provided a small list of retired military officials to serve as their lawyers, who were then given a maximum of ten days to prepare their case.⁷⁵ SAVAK handled each case's investigation, and according to Amnesty International, there is not a single known case of a defendant being acquitted.⁷⁶

Department three also had full access to Iran's telephone system, which allowed the organization to monitor any and all phone calls if needed.⁷⁷ SAVAK's ability to monitor personal phone calls exemplified the Shah's deep reach into the everyday life of Iranians. The organization's comprehensive filing system on citizens even turned inwards and took note of its own members. According to former SAVAK member Haseen e'tedali Ali-abadi, the organization even kept a blacklist file of members it planned to "deal with."⁷⁸

The extensive filing system of department three was used to screen applicants for private and government jobs.⁷⁹ This meant that *Sâzemân-e Ettelâ'ât va Amniat-e Kešvar* (SAVAK) functionally determined who worked for which company, in turn keeping political opposition out of meaningful employment. SAVAK's filing system also tracked Iranians applying for passports, and any evidence that an applicant took part in anti-Shah activity, or was connected to someone who did, automatically rejected their eligibility.⁸⁰ The ability to keep anyone who opposed the Shah from working or receiving a passport was an effective tool that ultimately kept many Iranians silent. Silence became

⁷⁴ Yoo, "An Analysis of United States Security Policy towards a Third World State during the Cold War Era," 291.

⁷⁵ Yoo, "An Analysis of United States Security Policy towards a Third World State during the Cold War Era," 291.

⁷⁶ Yoo, "An Analysis of United States Security Policy towards a Third World State during the Cold War Era," 291.

⁷⁷ IRI Center "SAVAK: Fathered by the CIA," 14:41.

⁷⁸ "SAVAK: Fathered by the CIA," 14:41.

⁷⁹ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 153.

⁸⁰ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 153.

evidence of the organization's effectiveness during the late 1960s; this is when the Shah's regime entered its "highly autonomous state," as stated by Gasiorowski.⁸¹

SAVAK's cultivation by, and integration with, foreign intelligence agencies proved to be one of its greatest strengths. While the CIA's motive for aiding SAVAK was to monitor the Soviet Union, SAVAK had its own intelligence interests within the United States.⁸² Iranian military officers received special training within the United States, an estimated 250 officers per year. It is reasonable to assume that at least some of these military officers were also members of, or informants to, the Shah's security organization—which the CIA itself suspected and determined was likely.⁸³ Beyond informing and training, these two agencies took on joint operations, typically surveilling neighboring countries, such as the Soviet Union, Iraq, and Afghanistan.⁸⁴ These joint operations ensured the Shah's grasp on the Persian Gulf, which strengthened his regional status.⁸⁵

Besides its patron country, the United States, SAVAK's most crucial partner was Israel's MOSSAD agency (which Israel itself could be argued to be a client state of the United States). In 1965 when the Shah exiled Bakhtiar for conspiring against him, many CIA agents were also sent back to the United States.⁸⁶ Soon after, MOSSAD agents took their place in Tehran to train SAVAK members in domestic surveillance and interrogation techniques.⁸⁷ Department three's successful domestic infiltration campaigns were largely attributed to MOSSAD's direct oversight.⁸⁸ Beyond domestic concerns, Israel's agency was also interested in conducting joint operations with SAVAK in neighboring Arab

⁸¹ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 160.

⁸² Asnad, "How CIA, Mossad Helped Form SAVAK."

⁸³ Nicholas Gage Special, "U.S.-Iran Links Still Strong," (The New York Times, July 9, 1978), 1.

⁸⁴ Nicholas Gage Special, "U.S.-Iran Links Still Strong," 1.

⁸⁵ Nicholas Gage Special, "U.S.-Iran Links Still Strong," 1.

⁸⁶ Meisels, "The Shah's 'Fatherly Eye,'" 9.

⁸⁷ "SAVAK: Fathered by the CIA," 7:35.

⁸⁸ "SAVAK: Fathered by the CIA," 7:35.

countries.⁸⁹ This was part of the Israeli policy, the Periphery Doctrine, which intended to create a triangular alliance with non-Arab countries in its geographical area.⁹⁰

The Shah's security organization kept immense records on media within and outside of Iran. Due to this oversight, any media that was critical of the Shah's rule was circulated in secretive underground networks.⁹¹ The Iranian press lacked the freedom to critique the Shah directly, so the most formidable voices of criticism came from foreign media.⁹² The Shah and *Sâzemân-e Ettelâ'ât va Amniyat-e Kešvar* (SAVAK) worked alongside The United Kingdom's Information Research Department (IRD) to curb outside criticism of the Iranian regime.⁹³ The United Kingdom and Iran already established friendly relations under the Baghdad pact of 1955; however, to ensure Iran continued to act as a Western puppet, the IRD took further action against the Shah's critics.⁹⁴ The first step of this joint operation was to monitor Soviet critiques of the Shah's regime.⁹⁵ Both organizations then took a "positive means" approach and published media sympathetic to the regime.⁹⁶ The IRD also took it upon themselves to further train SAVAK in advanced propaganda capabilities to counter any negative media.⁹⁷ While this relationship diminished the forums in which the Shah's regime could be critiqued, SAVAK allowed for some criticism to get through.⁹⁸ One such example, Reza

⁸⁹ "SAVAK: Fathered by the CIA," 7:50.

⁹⁰ Leon Hadar, "The Collapse of Israel's 'Periphery Doctrine'," *Foreign Policy*, June 27, 2010.

⁹¹ Iranian Student Association, "U.S. & France Support Shah's Fascism," November 16, 1976, 3.

⁹² Gholam R. Afkhami, *The Iranian Revolution: Thanatos on a National Scale*, (Washington, DC: Middle East Institute, 1985): 160.

⁹³ Darius Wainwright, "Equal Partners? The Information Research Department, SAVAK and the Dissemination of Anti-Communist Propaganda in Iran, 1956–68," Shibboleth authentication request, 2017.

⁹⁴ Wainwright, "Equal Partners?"

⁹⁵ Wainwright, "Equal Partners?"

⁹⁶ Wainwright, "Equal Partners?"

⁹⁷ Wainwright, "Equal Partners?"

⁹⁸ Gasiowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 157.

Baraheni's 1977, *The Crowned Cannibals*, described SAVAK's brutality and was circulated throughout Iran.⁹⁹ SAVAK likely allowed this work to circulate strategically to reinforce its reputation of fear, indicating the organization's ability to utilize positive and negative propaganda to benefit the Shah.

One of the organization's most significant surveillance operations happened to be within the United States, legitimizing the basis of the CIA's suspicions that Iranian agents trained in the United States may be informants. Multiple news agencies reported on Iranian students being harassed on college campuses, such as Eric Ringham of the *Minnesota Daily* 1978 reported that multiple students were approached by apparent CIA members who asked the students to monitor their classmates and report back to their assigned handlers.¹⁰⁰ Don Fraser (1924-2019), the Representative of Minnesota's 5th Congressional District from 1963-1979, even commented that "There's not much question that SAVAK has been making efforts to keep track of Iranian students."¹⁰¹ On one account, a student named Reza Zanjani's visa and financial aid was revoked by the Iranian embassy, functionally holding him hostage unless he presented a list of his anti-Shah peers to SAVAK.¹⁰² In January 1978, new information was brought to light through correspondence between Aryeh Neir (b. 1937), executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union, and Secretary of State Cyrus Vance (1917-2002), that the FBI identified Iranian students suspected of rioting and reported them to SAVAK.¹⁰³ Further evidence exposed the organization's collaboration with the

⁹⁹ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 157.

¹⁰⁰ Eric Ringham, "CIA Said to Want Students to Monitor Iranians," *Minnesota Daily*, November 21, 1978.

¹⁰¹ Ringham, "CIA Said to Want Students to Monitor Iranians."

¹⁰² Richard Sale "SAVAK Said at Work in Washington," *The Washington Post* (WP Company, May 10, 1977).

¹⁰³ Memorandum of Conversation, Neir-Vance Correspondence. June 29, 1977, P770175-1784, Central Foreign Policy Files, 1973-79/P-Reel Printouts, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, National Archives.

Chicago police department and FBI to undermine and document anti-Shah protests.¹⁰⁴

Following the arrest of Iranian students in the United States in 1978, Senator Birch Bayh (1928-2019) wrote to the FBI Director, William Webster (b. 1924), suspicious of the relationship between the FBI and SAVAK.¹⁰⁵ Bayh was given information by Webster that the Chicago Police Department had, in fact, collaborated with SAVAK and that the FBI's close relationship was worthy of his suspicion and constituted, in Bayh's words, "improper conduct."¹⁰⁶ Despite such conclusions about the organization's blackmail and harassment of students within the United States, it received relatively little pushback from the United States government. While the extent to which the FBI and SAVAK cooperated remains largely uncovered, it is reasonable to suspect that this liaison network greatly aided the Shah.

SAVAK as a Tool of Domestic Political Consolidation

After toppling the Tudeh party, SAVAK's next target was the National Front. While a vast number of its members were arrested and forcibly retired from politics during the 1953 coup, many returned to the political scene and advocated for their original goal: a state free of imperial influence.¹⁰⁷ One of the most influential members of the National Front, or the national resistance movement, was Mehdi Bazargan (1907-1995).¹⁰⁸ Bazargan maintained close relations with Mossadegh after the coup and helped establish the Iran Party and Islamic Student Society, which became a prominent vessel for revolutionaries leading up to

¹⁰⁴ United States Senate, *Memorandum from FBI Director William Webster to Senator Birch Bayh*, Washington D.C., 1978, FOIPA #1364010-0, 1978.

¹⁰⁵ United States Senate, *Memorandum from FBI Director William Webster to Senator Birch Bayh*.

¹⁰⁶ United States Senate, *Memorandum from FBI Director William Webster to Senator Birch Bayh*.

¹⁰⁷ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 457.

¹⁰⁸ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 457.

1979.¹⁰⁹ The Islamic Student Society was the only non-governmental organization allowed at Tehran University, which attracted communist members despite Bazargan's anti-communist stance and communism's ostensibly atheistic bent.¹¹⁰

The National Front initially seemed promising when guided by politically experienced leaders with a nationalist appeal like Mossadegh, but by 1956 most of the National Front's leaders were arrested, and SAVAK's repression forced the opposition to be orchestrated covertly.¹¹¹ Rather than castigate the United States for aiding the Shah's dictatorial rule, Bazargan's Iran Party believed that if the United States restrained SAVAK, then Mossadegh supporters could gain a prominent position within the *Majles*—a consultative assembly that serves as Iran's legislative body.¹¹² However, this contradicted the cliency relationship's primary goal, establishing a politically stable environment in the client state, the reason SAVAK was created, and the ends to which its savagery was justified.¹¹³ Simply put, it was not in the United States' interest to restrain SAVAK because it was created as a means to ensure the Shah remained on the throne. While the National Front lost momentum in the late 1950s, its message continued to resonate with many Iranian students and Mossadegists.¹¹⁴

During the John F. Kennedy (1917-1963) presidency (1961-1963), the United States pressured the Shah to pull back on his oppressive style.¹¹⁵ To maintain the cliency relationship, the Shah took on a more liberal persona in order to shape his public image; however, *Sâzemân-e Ettelâ'ât va Amniat-e Kešvar* (SAVAK) had already infiltrated the most formidable forms of official political opposition.¹¹⁶ The Shah appointed Ali Amini

¹⁰⁹ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 458.

¹¹⁰ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 458.

¹¹¹ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 459.

¹¹² Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 459.

¹¹³ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 18.

¹¹⁴ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 459.

¹¹⁵ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 185.

¹¹⁶ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 98-205.

(1905-1992) to the position of Prime Minister in 1961 with the goal of establishing liberal reforms within Iran.¹¹⁷ Despite the Shah's notions towards reform, this did not soothe the National Front; while Amini made a plea for cooperation with the National Front he was met with an ultimatum to disband SAVAK, demonstrating the widespread contempt for SAVAK as a repressive tool.¹¹⁸

However, an internal dispute split the National Front into two separate parties in 1959.¹¹⁹ The Second National Front was aligned with Bazargan's Iran party and published the prominent newspaper *Bakhtar-i Emruz*.¹²⁰ The other break in the National Front, named the Third National Front, consisted of the Liberation Movement and the Socialist Society, and handled political activity outside of Iran in countries like France and the United States.¹²¹ The Third National Front published newspapers, such as *Iran Azad*, and attempted to coordinate with Khomeini and other exiled religious leaders who ultimately played a significant role in the revolution.¹²² While the newspapers and groups mentioned above played a key role in organizing against the Shah, the budding Liberation Movement seemed to be the most formidable opponent to the Shah's autocratic rule.

The Liberation Movement enjoyed the membership of devout Muslims as well as secular socialists primarily because of the message of one particular scholar, Shari'ati (1933-1977).¹²³ Shari'ati was a well-educated sociologist who gained widespread support for his wisdom and anti-imperialist perspective, which he connected to his religious convictions.¹²⁴ Shari'ati's lectures at the Husseinieh (typically a building or dedicated space within a

¹¹⁷ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 182.

¹¹⁸ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 183.

¹¹⁹ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 459.

¹²⁰ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 459.

¹²¹ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 460.

¹²² Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 460.

¹²³ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 462.

¹²⁴ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 463.

mosque or Islamic center designed to host religious lectures and Quranic studies) attracted a wide range of listeners, contributing to the Liberation Movement's diversity.¹²⁵ Though SAVAK's overt brutality relaxed at the request of the Kennedy presidency, SAVAK did not stop working covertly to gather intelligence on organizations that threatened the Shah's throne.¹²⁶ SAVAK's violent repression continued overtly as well when necessary, often during public demonstrations such as the Bloody Riots of 1963, in which thousands of Iranians took to the streets to protest the arrest of Khomeini.¹²⁷ The people clashed with SAVAK, and the event concluded with the death of hundreds of Iranians, many of them National Front and Liberation Movement members.¹²⁸ After Khomeini's arrest, SAVAK intensified its pursuit of Shari'ati, first closing his popular place of teaching the Husseinih and banning all of his works, eventually successfully arresting him in 1972.¹²⁹ Though the Algerian government appealed for his release, Shari'ati remained under house arrest and eventually accepted a move to London, where he died of a heart attack in 1977.¹³⁰ His supporters believed SAVAK murdered him, considering SAVAK's track record and reputation, it seemed a reasonable conclusion.

With Shari'ati's arrest and death, the Liberation Movement lost one of its prized intellectuals and driving forces; ultimately, its many students splintered into multiple guerrilla groups that subsequently targeted the Shah.¹³¹ The two most prominent of these militant guerrilla groups were the Mojahideen-e Khalq (MEK) and the Feda'i.¹³² Both groups were founded by and made up largely of students from Tehran University.¹³³ Despite rising salaries for early graduates, young academics also organized

¹²⁵ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 465.

¹²⁶ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 466.

¹²⁷ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 473.

¹²⁸ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 466.

¹²⁹ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 466.

¹³⁰ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 473.

¹³¹ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 473.

¹³² Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 194.

¹³³ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 180.

against the Shah's callous rule.¹³⁴ Each group gained support from the disenfranchised class of students and teachers who recognized that the Shah no longer acted in the people's interest, enabled by his oppressive U.S.-funded security apparatus.¹³⁵

The appeal of these, and a number of other militant groups, marks a significant turning point in the Shah's rule; the repressive nature of the state and liberal use of SAVAK led politically active members of society to take arms to achieve liberation. As stated by the MEK,

The Regime is trying to place a wedge between Muslims and Marxists. In our view, however, there is only one major enemy-imperialism and its local collaborators. When SAVAK shoots, it kills both Muslims and Marxists. When it tortures, it tortures both Muslims and Marxists. Consequently, in the present situation there is an organic unity between Muslim revolutionaries and Marxist revolutionaries.¹³⁶

The shared goal of these guerrilla groups was not to establish a Marxist leadership or Muslim theocracy but to destroy the systems of oppression and imperial rule that both groups were subject to by the Shah. The fascinating reality of these guerrilla groups was their ability to organize despite their different ideologies (including Maoist perspectives), demonstrating the consequence of a repressive state uniting its forces of opposition.¹³⁷

¹³⁴ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 481.

¹³⁵ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 482.

¹³⁶ Mujahideen Organization *Pasokh Beh Etemat-i Ekhar-i Rezhim: An Answer to The Regime's Latest Slanders*, n.p. 1975 p.10-13.

¹³⁷ Peyman Vahabzadeh, *A Guerrilla Odyssey: Modernization, Secularism, Democracy, and the FADAI Period of National Liberation in Iran, 1971-1979* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2010), 12.

During 1964-1977, the Shah's "highly autonomous state" was well established, and SAVAK effectively infiltrated and arrested many of the opposition group's members.¹³⁸ SAVAK often killed members of these groups in shootouts or from the brutal torture prisoners were subjected to.¹³⁹ Only ten out of the 306 murdered guerrillas killed in direct confrontation with state forces in shootouts or from brutal torture during SAVAK imprisonment were over the age of thirty-five, demonstrating the appeal to younger populations and students.¹⁴⁰ SAVAK was able to track down and kill dissidents even in rural parts of Iran through collaboration with the Gendarmerie (a domestic police force of the Shah).¹⁴¹ The many shootouts and kidnappings that resulted in SAVAK's pursuit of these anti-Shah groups would most likely have been avoided if the state did not reach such a level of negligence enabled via the Shah's autonomy.¹⁴² While SAVAK was able to neutralize the organizing potential of these groups in the early 1970s, their dissident message resonated with many Iranians who later took part in the Iranian Revolution of 1979.¹⁴³ While the ideological ends of groups such as the MEK and Feda'i did not materialize after the Shah's rule, the efforts provided by these groups laid the foundations for a greater anti-Shah movement to come.¹⁴⁴

Elections and Political Participation

Sâzemân-e Ettelâ'ât va Amniyat-e Kešvar (SAVAK) oversaw all political engagements within Iran and manipulated Iran's electoral system, the key to ensuring the Shah's continued rule.¹⁴⁵ In 1975,

¹³⁸ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 483.

¹³⁹ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 187.

¹⁴⁰ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 480.

¹⁴¹ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 487.

¹⁴² Vahabzadeh, *A Guerrilla Odyssey*, 12.

¹⁴³ Reza Behrani, "SAVAK Documents." *The Nation*, February 23, 1980, 2.

¹⁴⁴ Peyman Vahabzadeh, *A Guerrilla Odyssey*, 15.

¹⁴⁵ Meisels, "The Shah's 'Fatherly Eye,'" 14.

the Shah officially established a one-party state, though only a decade earlier, the Shah claimed one-party states were reserved for leaders such as Adolf Hitler.¹⁴⁶ This decision was a testament to the sense of security the Shah felt, in other words, autonomy from his people thanks to his expansive security apparatus—or it could be argued it demonstrated his assumed need to acquire such autonomy and isolate himself from building political pressure. Before the Shah established a one-party state, SAVAK ensured the Shah's two-party system was just as rigged. Regarding the supposedly free elections of the Twentieth *Majles* in 1960, the Shah told the United States Ambassador Edward T. Wailes (1903-1969) that SAVAK was given the order to rig these elections.¹⁴⁷ To establish his one-party state, the Shah relied heavily on SAVAK's vast intelligence network to ensure his newly created Resurgence Party grasped onto the salaried middle class of Iran.¹⁴⁸

The Resurgence Party acted as a body of repression rather than a free political body of the people. With SAVAK's help, it infiltrated the Ministries of Labor, Housing, and Mines, which employed a vast swath of the Iranian middle and working classes, and therefore the Resurgence Party became a substantial part of everyday Iranian life.¹⁴⁹ Predictably, the state's ability to monitor Iranians and control their daily life increased under the Shah's new one-party political system. Members of the party could not belong to any other political organizations (not that those organizations would be allowed in the first place) and could not criticize the Shah.¹⁵⁰ This meant that an average Iranian had the choice to be part of the Shah's political body or no part of the political system in any official matter.¹⁵¹ While there were a handful of artists and

¹⁴⁶ Reza Pahlavi Shah of Persia, *Mission for My Country* (London, 1961), 173.

¹⁴⁷ US Embassy Tehran, to Secretary of State "Political Parties Prepare for Coming Elections," March 5th, 1960 "Interim Report on Iran's 20th Majils Elections," September 24th, 1960.

¹⁴⁸ Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 442.

¹⁴⁹ Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 442.

¹⁵⁰ Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 442.

¹⁵¹ Yoo, "An Analysis of United States Security Policy," 295.

writers that spoke out against the Shah's Resurgence Party, one of the most influential groups to speak out was the Iranian Student Association (ISA), which the Shah banned in 1971.¹⁵²

The ISA called upon the citizens of France and the United States to recognize the plight of Iranians under Pahlavi's totalitarian rule. Their 1976 publication, "U.S. and France Support Shah's Fascism," asked "all progressive freedom-loving people to be alert to the joint conspiracy of SAVAK and the French government," and urged "everyone to phone the French embassy and consulates in the US."¹⁵³ In the same publication, the ISA argued that SAVAK's vast surveillance and control over Iran's political system was one of the deepest grievances within Iranian society and that the United States and France were guilty of propping up the Shah's regime.¹⁵⁴ Perhaps the most significant aspect of the ISA, it exposed the lack of political freedom within Iran and linked the repression to SAVAK. Crucially, the ISA operated throughout Europe and the United States, where it was able to speak on these issues freely, unlike many Iranians within Iran. SAVAK heightened the Shah's autonomy by establishing a one-party state but also cut the Shah off from his population. SAVAK sealed the regime's fate during this period of political consolidation by stoking widespread fear and hatred, which forced organized resistance underground, where the Shah's opposition grew into a revolutionary force.¹⁵⁵

The Cult of Fear and the Inevitable Revolution

Although *Sâzemân-e Ettelâ'ât va Amniat-e Kešvar* (SAVAK) only employed 7,000 full-time agents at its peak, the organization was

¹⁵² Iranian Student Association, "U.S. & France Support Shah's Fascism," November 16, 1976, <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP88-01315R000300380055-1.pdf> 2.

¹⁵³ Iranian Student Association, "U.S. & France Support Shah's Fascism," 2.

¹⁵⁴ Iranian Student Association, "U.S. & France Support Shah's Fascism," 3.

¹⁵⁵ Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 446.

the embodiment of terror to many everyday Iranians.¹⁵⁶ The organization operated on such a large scale nobody would have guessed it only had 7,000 full-time agents, but what it lacked in membership, it made up for with bloody intimidation. Their brutality and all-encompassing surveillance were the two most effective characteristics of the organization and fostered SAVAK's feared reputation. Ironically, with its widespread and harsh abuse, this "cult of fear" that SAVAK cultivated made the agency a primary target during the Iranian Revolution.

SAVAK's reputation for brutality largely came from its barbaric torture methods. As described by former SAVAK member and interrogator, Ali Akbar Dehqani, there were "no limits" with regard to the organization's rules, which meant any method of torture deemed necessary to extract information from prisoners was applicable.¹⁵⁷ SAVAK's barbaric methods became a joke amongst British officials simply for the absurd lengths the organization went to extract information.¹⁵⁸ As stated in 1971 by British officials in a telegram after SAVAK ignored an inquiry on the well-being of a Tudeh activist, "presumably it takes a little while for the first to be resurrected and the second to be disemboweled."¹⁵⁹ Future messages about torture continued in a joking fashion, such as, "SAVAK, having twisted his balls off, were having difficulty putting them back on again!"¹⁶⁰

In the late 1960s, after the Shah appointed Nematollah Nassiri (1910-1979) director of SAVAK, the organization expanded its use of torture, training its members to "maximize pain without killing detainees."¹⁶¹ As described in a 1980 pamphlet

¹⁵⁶ "SAVAK Fathered by the CIA," 27:00.

¹⁵⁷ "SAVAK: Fathered by the CIA," 27:07.

¹⁵⁸ Meisels, "The Shah's 'Fatherly Eye,'" 16.

¹⁵⁹ "The Bakhtiar Plot," British Embassy to UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, January 1, 1971. British Embassy Telegram. M2042 Box 10, Abbas Milani Research Collection, Stanford University.

¹⁶⁰ "Terrorism," British Embassy to UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, April 5, 1971, British Embassy Telegram, M2042 Box 11, Abbas Milani Research Collection, Stanford University.

¹⁶¹ Meisels, "The Shah's 'Fatherly Eye,'" 16.

published by the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran authored by former prisoner Mehdi Reza'i, some of the most brutal methods included; acid burning followed up with hot plates placed on the raw skin, the whipping of feet with steel cables, and another method frequently employed used cattle prods.¹⁶² The use of whipping cables was one of the most feared methods of torture, not only for its blunt harm, but it was usually used in combination with an iron bucket strapped around the prisoner's head to amplify their screams into their own ears.¹⁶³ Former prisoner Mehdi Malekolketab Khiabani's accounts demonstrate the variety of methods employed in recounting one of his most brutal memories;

After they lashed us with cables the interrogator would ask us, 'are you thirsty?' There was a jar this big containing one or two liters of water. They would give us the water, and we would drink it to the bottom nonstop. Later they would take us to the main circle and tie us up on the bars. They would then close up our urination pathways. We didn't immediately need to be relieved. But after some time, the closure would hugely press on our kidneys. It was so horrible, excuse my language, but it would make us scream like a horse.¹⁶⁴

Along with physical torture, SAVAK employed psychological torture on their detainees. Since most prisoner cells were relatively small and close in proximity, many of the prisoners could hear the torture of their cellmates, who were even subjected to mock executions to further frighten those listening.¹⁶⁵ Furthermore many of the prisoners went without sleep for multiple days (a method of psychological torture used in many

¹⁶² Mehdi Reza'i, *The Defenses of Martyred Mojahed* (The People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran, 1980), 12.

¹⁶³ "SAVAK: Fathered by the CIA," 37:04.

¹⁶⁴ Meisels, "The Shah's 'Fatherly Eye,'" 16.

¹⁶⁵ "SAVAK: Fathered by the CIA," 42:00

interrogations to the present day, including by United States forces during The War on Terror).¹⁶⁶ Fake medical records were produced for any detainee that died in SAVAK captivity as a cover-up of the organization's gruesome practices, which absolved torturers of any responsibility for their actions and provided cover from international criticism.¹⁶⁷

Eventually, though, the brutality of the Shah's security agency could not be ignored, and his allies pressured the Shah, most importantly its patron in the client relationship, the United States, to end these practices.¹⁶⁸ Although the Shah banned torture in 1976, the damage to his regime's reputation was thorough and overlooked for too long.¹⁶⁹ According to the Geneva-based International Commission of Jurists, human rights violations, including torture, "are alleged to have taken place on an unprecedented scale."¹⁷⁰ By 1980, it was estimated that at least half a million Iranians had been assaulted, or at the very least interrogated by SAVAK members, which produced a large class of Iranians with an ever-growing feeling of animosity that culminated in the Iranian Revolution the previous year.¹⁷¹

The discontent many Iranians felt towards SAVAK was deepened by its ability to infiltrate everyday Iranian life while being simultaneously impossible to catch. While the characteristics of the organization's surveillance practices and infiltration capabilities have already been discussed, it is crucial to recognize just how these actions impacted the psyche of everyday Iranians prior to the revolution. SAVAK created such a climate of fear that the average Iranian was scared to speak critically of the regime within their own home with their own family.¹⁷² Furthermore, the

¹⁶⁶ Meisels, "The Shah's 'Fatherly Eye,'" 16.

¹⁶⁷ "SAVAK: Fathered by the CIA," 31:07.

¹⁶⁸ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 187.

¹⁶⁹ Meisels, "The Shah's 'Fatherly Eye,'" 50.

¹⁷⁰ "Human Rights: Torture as Policy: The Network of Evil," *Time* (Time Inc., August 16, 1976),

<https://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,914534,00.html>

¹⁷¹ Reza Behrani, "SAVAK Documents." *The Nation*, February 23, 1980, 2.

¹⁷² Yoo, "An Analysis of United States Security Policy," 295.

Shah's international boasting of his "liberalizing" regime left many Iranians with a sour taste.¹⁷³ All the actions SAVAK had taken to cement the Shah's throne ironically created a group of dissatisfied Iranians, made dire when the alienated middle and working classes aligned themselves with radical students, like those who made up the majority of militant groups and the clergy.¹⁷⁴

The Iranian Revolution

Although *Sâzemân-e Ettelâ'ât va Amniat-e Kešvar* (SAVAK) ruthlessly suppressed the Shah's most formidable opposition groups in the early 1970s, the groups' revolutionary message carried on and rebounded with the help of the clergy.¹⁷⁵ Many of the anti-Shah groups differed in terms of ideological approach yet were united by their common enemy. Ultimately, the Shah alienated too wide a swath of Iranian society, culminating in a diverse force of Shi'ite clergy, Marxists of different sects, workers, teachers, and students that were able to overthrow him.

In an attempt to manage inflation, which was running high in 1977, and hopefully calm public opinion, the Shah ordered SAVAK to set up a system of guild courts.¹⁷⁶ These guild courts were designed to chastise Iran's Bazaar class, also known as the merchant class, while at the same time providing the government with much-needed funds.¹⁷⁷ At the Shah's direction, SAVAK used these courts to fine over 250,000 traders, ban around 80,000, and sentence a couple thousand to prison, all while the Shah was being pressured by his allies to alleviate the countless human rights abuses his regime was responsible for.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷³ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 457.

¹⁷⁴ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 187.

¹⁷⁵ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 214.

¹⁷⁶ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 498.

¹⁷⁷ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 499.

¹⁷⁸ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 498.

In order to keep his greatest ally, the United States, happy, the Shah began to restrain SAVAK's actions.¹⁷⁹ The pullback of SAVAK's actions led to a major buildup of groups critical to the Shah's regime, such as the Writer's Association and the Group for Free Books and Free Thought.¹⁸⁰ The Writers Association consisted of many novelists, poets, Mossadegists, and former Tudeh members.¹⁸¹ This association, headed by sixty-four lawyers, drafted a manifesto against the Shah's regime describing the Shah's hypocrisy.¹⁸² The association argued that the Shah dishonestly presented himself on the world stage as a liberalizing reformer despite his consistent use of SAVAK to stifle all cultural aspects of Iranian life and censor the media.¹⁸³

Furthermore, with the revival of the National Front, opposition forces began a paper called *Khabarnameh* in 1978, which listed the dissolution of SAVAK as one of its primary goals.¹⁸⁴ The opposition forces stated this as one of their primary goals because the Shah's autonomous rule relied directly on SAVAK's ability to suppress the people. As these opposition groups grew, they began to hold public demonstrations, including reading and writing groups.¹⁸⁵ When police arrived to break up the tenth session of one such writing group at Aryamehr University in 1977, they were met with over 10,000 discontent students.¹⁸⁶ The resulting protest signified the growing tide of revolution, and despite widespread police shootings and arrests of demonstrators from this point forward, Iranians chose liberation over fear.

The radical clergy made up one of the most, if not the most, instrumental groups leading the Iranian Revolution, partly because mosques and religious schools were some of the only places

¹⁷⁹ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 500.

¹⁸⁰ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 187.

¹⁸¹ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 500.

¹⁸² Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 501.

¹⁸³ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 503.

¹⁸⁴ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 504.

¹⁸⁵ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 504.

¹⁸⁶ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 505.

relatively free of SAVAK spying.¹⁸⁷ Although the future figurehead of the Revolution and soon-to-be leader of Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini was exiled to Iraq years previously, where he recorded sermons on cassette tapes to be smuggled into Iran and shared amongst his sizable following.¹⁸⁸ Khomeini managed to keep the distribution of these tapes mostly secret, which then contributed to the organization of opposition groups during the revolution. A 1977 United States State Department report stated that despite Khomeini's efforts through his tapes, Iran would remain under the Shah's control for many years to come, thanks to SAVAK's actions.¹⁸⁹ This report shows that while Khomeini's outside organizing was known to the United States, its influence was greatly underestimated.

Following police crackdowns on student demonstrations, many theology students took to the streets to protest and chanted, "We demand the return of Ayatollah Khomeini!"¹⁹⁰ This intense political climate only escalated upon the death of Khomeini's son, Mostafa, in 1977, which many of his supporters believed *Sâzemân-e Ettelâ'ât va Amniyat-e Kešvar* (SAVAK) played a role in.¹⁹¹ Khomeini encouraged further demonstrations, which the state initially responded to in a mixed fashion of repression and restraint; however, this restraint proved to be short-lived as the clergy and student body organized riots in Mashhad on July 23rd, 1978 which quickly turned bloody.¹⁹² These riots reached a deadly climax when arsonists set fire to the Rex Theater and locked the front doors, which killed over four hundred innocent Iranians.¹⁹³ Rumor quickly spread that the fire was a SAVAK operation,

¹⁸⁷ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 216.

¹⁸⁸ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 216.

¹⁸⁹ "State Department, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Report No. 704, 'The Future of Iran: Implications for the US,' Secret, January 28, 1977," | National Security Archive, 1977, <https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/document/18190-national-security-archive-doc-01-state> 5.

¹⁹⁰ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 505.

¹⁹¹ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 216.

¹⁹² Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 218.

¹⁹³ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 218.

widely believed because of the organization's brutal reputation, leading even more Iranians to take to the street in opposition to the Shah and his security apparatus.¹⁹⁴ The United States embassy in Tehran wrote to the State Department in 1978, further clarifying that SAVAK played a crucial role in safeguarding the Shah and expected a military takeover to maintain the Shah's position.¹⁹⁵ However, the Shah took a different approach which most likely sealed his fate.

In an attempt to win back support, the Shah took multiple actions to appease his opposition, including freeing political prisoners and arresting corrupt officials—among them Nassiri, the chief of SAVAK.¹⁹⁶ However, these concessions were far too late. Opposition forces had already taken the British Embassy, and they had no desire to compromise with the Shah.¹⁹⁷ To make matters worse for the Shah, Washington D.C. lost all confidence in his regime and encouraged him to compromise with the opposition.¹⁹⁸ With no options left, the Shah turned to Shapour Bakhtiar (1914-1991), a leader of the National Front who appealed to the Shah because Bakhtiar refused to work with Khomeini.¹⁹⁹ Bakhtiar gave the Shah an ultimatum; if he were to establish a government, the Shah must leave Iran, release all political prisoners, and, most importantly to this research, dissolve SAVAK.²⁰⁰ On December 30th, 1978, Bakhtiar became Prime Minister of Iran; however, his administration was short-lived.

¹⁹⁴ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 218.

¹⁹⁵ "U.S. Embassy Tehran, William Sullivan, Telegram to State Department, 'Looking Ahead: The Military Option,' Secret, November 2, 1978," U.S. Embassy Tehran, William Sullivan, Telegram to State Department, "Looking Ahead: The Military Option," Secret, November 2, 1978 | National Security Archive, November 2, 1978, <https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/document/18194-national-security-archive-doc-06-telegram> 1.

¹⁹⁶ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 221.

¹⁹⁷ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 221.

¹⁹⁸ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 524.

¹⁹⁹ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 524.

²⁰⁰ Gasiorowski, *United States Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 221.

The National Front and Khomeini denounced the new government and called for a militant approach, which resonated with many dissatisfied Iranians.²⁰¹ When Khomeini returned to Tehran on February 1st, 1979, he was greeted by a crowd of three million supporters, ready to organize general strikes and protest on his behalf.²⁰² It is important to note that during this period, the Iranian and the United States' relationship was not yet severed; President Carter believed that as one of the West's top oil suppliers, it was crucial to maintain Iranian relations.²⁰³ As Bakhtiar's government atrophied, many of the same groups SAVAK previously persecuted began to mobilize, such as a teacher's association, which organized to create its own armed militia.²⁰⁴ On February 11th, 1979, the militant groups successfully combated the police forces within Iran, and SAVAK's headquarters was one of the first government buildings laid to siege.²⁰⁵ Nassiri, the organization's former director, was executed shortly after, and the organization's three safehouses throughout Tehran were discovered.²⁰⁶ The brutal conditions these safehouses were left in, which Reza Behrami describes, included "pieces of human flesh still stuck to torture instruments, shocked most of the spectators."²⁰⁷ The tipping point of U.S.-Iranian relations came on October 29th, 1979, when the Shah was admitted into the United States for cancer treatment.²⁰⁸ Many Iranians wanted the Shah to stand trial for his crimes against Iranians, and coupled with Iran's history of foreign intervention, this decision added insult to injury.²⁰⁹ Shortly after this, Iranians stormed the United States

²⁰¹ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 525.

²⁰² Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 525.

²⁰³ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 524.

²⁰⁴ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 527.

²⁰⁵ The True Nature of the U.S Regime, the "Great Satan," 10.

²⁰⁶ Yoo, "An Analysis of United States Security Policy," 295.

²⁰⁷ Reza Behrani, "SAVAK Documents," 2.

²⁰⁸ Liz Dee, "Admitting the Shah to the U.S.: Every Form of Refuge Has Its Price," Association for Diplomatic Studies & Training, August 23, 2016.

²⁰⁹ Liz Dee, "Admitting the Shah to the U.S."

embassy in Tehran and took the diplomats inside hostage, marking an end to the U.S.-Iran cliency relationship.

Inside the embassy, revolutionaries discovered the full extent to which the United States and the Shah worked together to secure the Shah's throne and advance the United States' foreign policy interests via SAVAK. These findings, uncovered by piecing back together shredded documents within the embassy, were published in 1984 as *The True Nature of the U.S Regime, the "Great Satan."*²¹⁰ These documents included confirmation of the CIA's role in the construction of and assistance given to SAVAK, as well as proof that the embassy secured special visas and extra financial aid to SAVAK members.²¹¹ The findings also affirmed that the United States was committed to keeping SAVAK operational within Iran, despite its reputation, because the organization kept the Shah in power, who in turn kept Iran within the Western camp.²¹² The documents found in the United States embassy demonstrate that the U.S.-Iran cliency relationship depended on strengthening the Shah's security apparatus. However, the aid and support for the Shah's security organization did not secure Iran in the long run. Ultimately, SAVAK's repressive capabilities inspired many Iranians to oppose the Shah rather than submit to the regime's intimidating nature.

Conclusion

The Islamic Revolution marked a definitive end of the cliency relationship and the beginning of seemingly unending hostility between the United States and Iran. The strategic role of the policeman of the gulf on the Soviet border was lost, and with it, a change to the United States' entire strategy regarding the Middle East. The decades of strategic blunder that propped up the Shah began with the assumption that the cliency relationship's wants

²¹⁰ The True Nature of the U.S Regime, the "Great Satan." (Tehran, 1984), 67.

²¹¹ The True Nature of the U.S Regime, the "Great Satan." 68.

²¹² The True Nature of the U.S Regime, the "Great Satan." 55.

(the Shah's wants) could be prioritized to ensure continued friendly relations and thus override the people's needs.

This relationship started in 1953 with the overthrow of democratically elected Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh and U.S. support of the Shah, a crime against the Iranian people made worse by the decision to repress any other democratic sentiment by creating and then bolstering *Sâzemân-e Ettelâ'ât va Amniat-e Kešvar* (SAVAK). The military, surveillance, and intelligence aid the United States provided Iran throughout the Shah's rule, embodied by SAVAK, allowed him to act with indifference towards his people. This is what Mark J. Gasiorowski considered a highly autonomous state, or a state that can act without depending on its constituents by repressing their needs and regulating political participation.

SAVAK played a major role in heightening the state's autonomy. The organization controlled or monitored nearly every aspect of Iranians' lives, from their job screenings and passports to the media they consumed, and even left Iranians fearful of what they could say in their own homes. SAVAK's brutal reputation became more evident when equipped with all the surveillance technology it desired; the organization infiltrated every prominent opposition group and tortured thousands of Iranians, creating more dissidents in the process. Ultimately the repressive nature of the Shah's regime became its downfall, sowing the seeds of the Iranian Revolution led by the radical clergy and student groups, both previously persecuted by SAVAK. Once middle and working-class Iranians had enough of the Shah's boot on their necks, and all other forms of opposition were repressed, they joined with the radical and militant groups of various ideological and theological bents united by the common enemy. Evident through the above examination of SAVAK -the tool of autonomy- and its repressive methods, the U.S.-Iran client relationship and the resulting autonomy of the client state are to blame for its collapse.

Although many of SAVAK's members were executed during the revolution, the capabilities of this security apparatus did not wither away. The intelligence network the organization created

became a useful asset to the Islamic Republic of Iran, and SAVAK was quickly rebranded into *Veżarat-e Eţtela'at Jomhuri-ye Eslami* (SAVAMA), which differed only in name and ownership.²¹³ SAVAMA exists as a testament to the repressive potential of *Sâzemân-e Eţtelâ'ât va Amniyat-e Keşvar* (SAVAK), serving as a haunting reminder of the Shah's authoritarian rule and the repressive tools birthed from the U.S.-Iran cliency relationship.

²¹³ Pre-Comment: Intelligence Services, Part 2: Iranian Strategies of Internal Stability, External Destabilization and Deception," The Global Intelligence Files - [MESA], 2010, https://wikileaks.org/gifiles/docs/10/105055_-mesa-pre-comment-intelligence-services-part-2-iranian.html

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History in the Making

Mixing: A History of Anti-Miscegenation Laws in the United States

By Nyla Provost

Abstract: For over a century, many Americans believed that interracial marriage was unnatural. From the late 1860s through the late 1960s, the American legal system supported the belief that interracial marriages were illegitimate. In this paper, I examine how anti-miscegenation laws promoted and sustained white supremacy, socioeconomic position, and racial caste using anti-miscegenation literature, legislation, and court cases. This study is significant because it examines the impact that anti-miscegenation laws had on the United States' racial caste system and the American justice system.

Introduction

Joe Kirby requested an annulment from his wife Mayellen in court on March 21, 1921. Joe Kirby wanted out of his marriage after seven years. He requested an annulment instead of divorce, claiming that his marriage was illegitimate from its beginning because Arizona law forbade marriages between “people of Caucasian ancestry” or “their descendants” and “Negroes, Mongolians, or Indians” and “their descendants.”¹ Joe Kirby claimed that while he was of Caucasian ancestry, his wife, Mayellen, was of African-American ancestry. Because Joe Kirby’s claims were based on a long and terrible precedent of American miscegenation law, his request for annulment was granted without deliberation.² After all, anti-miscegenation laws were the law of the land in the early 20th century. For a period of over one hundred

¹ C.J Ross, “Kirby v. Kirby Case,” Case Law Access Project, accessed June 5, 2022, <https://cite.case.law/ariz/24/9/>.

² Ross, “Kirby v. Kirby”

years, the United States banned marriages between whites and non-whites in an effort to promote a white-dominated society and legal system while maintaining the purity and superiority of the white race.

In this current day and age, interracial relationships are, in most cases, widely accepted in the U.S., but this has not always been the case. When surveying history, the topic of miscegenation has been shaped by various attitudes toward it. For example, in early colonial America (1492-1763), miscegenation was fairly accepted, but towards the latter end of the seventeenth century, it became more taboo and eventually forbidden in some colonies.

It is also important to note that miscegenation has been deeply ingrained into American history since its earliest beginnings in the Jamestown Colony, the first successful American colony. In the spring of 1614, a group diverse of European settlers and Native Indians, gathered in a room in Jamestown, Virginia to witness the marriage of Pocahontas (c.1596-1617) and John Rolfe (1585-1622), which was the first interracial marriage to be officiated on American soil. By the time the American Revolution (1763-1783) occurred interracial relationships in the American Colonies had skyrocketed. As a result, between 60,000 and 120,000 persons of “mixed” origin lived in the colonies at the time of the American Revolution.³

³ “Laws That Banned Mixed Marriages,” Ferris State University, 2010, <https://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/jimcrow/question/2010/may.htm>.



*Figure 1: The Marriage of John Rolfe and Pocahontas.*⁴

However, even in the midst of the rising number of interracial unions, mixed-race relationships in the American colonies were still frowned upon by many, especially in Virginia. Ironically, Virginia (the first colony to officiate an interracial marriage) became the first colony to ban interracial marriages in 1661.⁵ Miscegenation laws spread as the number of colonies increased; and by 1910, at least twenty-eight states had passed anti-miscegenation legislation.

The word miscegenation first made its way into American society in the early 1860s. The definition of the word, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, is the “mixing of or reproduction between different racial or ethnic groups, or between individuals belonging to different racial or ethnic groups; esp. sexual relationships and reproduction between white and non-white people; marriage or cohabitation by members of different ethnic

⁴ “The Marriage of Pocahontas and John Rolfe, 1614,” Landmark Events, August 4, 2017, <https://landmarkevents.org/history-highlight-week-of-april-2/>.

⁵ “Laws That Banned Mixed Marriages,” Ferris State University, 2010.

groups.”⁶ “Miscegenation: The Theory of the Blending of the Races, Applied to the American White Man and Negro” was the title of an anonymous propaganda tract released in New York City in 1864. The booklet claimed that the United States Republican Party supported “interbreeding” of “whites” with “negros,” which would ultimately lead to a point where the races would be indistinguishable.⁷ David Goodman Croly, the managing editor of the *New York World*, a Democratic Party publication, and George Wakeman, a reporter, were the pamphlets’ authors. The pamphlet was quickly exposed as a ruse to damage the Republicans, the Lincoln administration, and the abolitionist movement by using the concerns and racial prejudices prevalent among whites at the time.

Nonetheless, Republican opponents reproduced this pamphlet, and variants of it, widely in towns on both sides of the American Civil War (1861-1865). The term “miscegenation” swiftly entered widespread usage and became a popular buzzword in political and social circles. For more than a century, white segregationists falsely accused abolitionists and subsequent proponents for African American equality of covertly plotting the white race’s demise through miscegenation.

⁶ “Miscegenation,” Oxford Reference, Accessed 8 June. 2022, <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803100201137>.

⁷ Mark Sussman, “The ‘Miscegenation’ Troll,” *Daily-JSTOR*, February 20, 2019, <https://daily.jstor.org/the-miscegenation-troll/>



Figure 2: Political caricature published in 1864.⁸

⁸ "Political Caricature. No. 4, the Miscegenation Ball," The Library of Congress, accessed April 2023, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2008661682/>. On September 22, 1864, a Republican campaign dance took place at the Lincoln Central Campaign Club in New York, as seen in this hand-colored lithograph. In the image Republican officials can be seen dancing, chatting, and mingling with stylishly attired black females. Black women are scandalously kissed and held by Lincoln supporters who are seated on the corners of the room. Northern Democrats opposed abolition by exploiting worries about widespread racial mingling, or miscegenation, which they claimed would inevitably happen if Lincoln won a second term.



Figure 3: A political caricature published in 1835.⁹

⁹ “Practical Amalgamation,” Library Company of Philadelphia Digital Collections, n.d., https://digital.librarycompany.org/islandora/object/Islandora%3A65140?solr_nav%5Bid%5D=7159a6940a8c4cc272ba&solr_nav%5Bpage%5D=0&solr_nav%5Boffset%5D=5. An 1835 racist print promoting anti-abolitionists’ fears of multiracial personal relationships. Depicts a parlor scene where two interracial couples court on a couch. On the left, an attractive white woman sits on the lap of an African American man. The man, depicted in racist caricature with grotesque facial features, holds a guitar in his right hand as she engages him in a kiss. On the right, a rotund African American woman holds a fan in her right hand as she is wooed by a slender white man on his knees who kisses her left hand. Portraits of abolitionists Arthur Tappan, Daniel O’Connell (a radical Irish abolitionist), and John Quincy Adams are hung on the wall behind the couch. A white and black dog is in the left corner.

The one-drop hypothesis, which maintained that anyone having even “one drop” of African “blood” must be considered “black,” was one of the most effective strategies used to discourage the practice.¹⁰ Sexual relations between white males and African slave women were publicly denounced but secretly conducted and implicitly accepted before the Civil War. White women were considered sexually constrained by Victorian ideas of purity and religion, but black women were portrayed as more passionate and exotic. Slave women were portrayed as outlets for male sexual needs, while white women were urged to stay pure. Slavery relied on an expanding slave population, which led to enslavers ignoring or participating in the sexual exploitation of slave women. Slave women were deemed promiscuous despite the harsh and forceful abuse they endured. The development of negative imagery was justified by their high birth rates and revealing clothes, both of which were implications of their status as property. The prohibition on free black and white marriages fostered the sexual exploitation of black women, which further emphasized their inferiority to white women, and legitimized the white male’s sexual advances towards them. Many American states implemented anti-miscegenation legislation in the 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries based on disputed readings of the Bible, notably the account of Phinehas. These laws, classified as felonies, made it illegal to solemnize weddings between people of different ethnic groups and officiate such ceremonies.

Individuals attempting to marry were often charged with felony charges of adultery or fornication and miscegenation; Connecticut, New Hampshire, New York, New Jersey, Vermont, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Alaska, Hawaii, and Washington, D.C. were the only states to never draft such laws. In the 1883 decision *Pace v. Alabama*, the United States Supreme Court affirmed the validity of anti-miscegenation legislation.¹¹ These statutes were

¹⁰ Hickman, Christine B, “The Devil and the One Drop Rule: Racial Categories, African Americans, and the U.S. Census.” *Michigan Law Review* 95, no. 5 (1997): 1161–1265. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1290008>

¹¹ “*Pace v. State of Alabama.*,” Legal Information Institute (Legal

still in effect in the 20th century. Additional clauses were added in the 1924 “Bill to Preserve the Integrity of the White Race,” which defined “white” as those without non-white blood and barred whites from marrying non-whites, except those with less than one-sixteenth of American Indian ancestry. White women were seen as safe havens for white racial legitimacy, white males were implicitly permitted to have mulatto (mixed race) offspring without jeopardizing white racial purity. Judge Leon Bazile of the Virginia trial court condemned an interracial couple who married in Washington, D.C., to prison in 1965, writing: “The races of white, black, yellow, and red were created by Almighty God and put on distinct continents. He did not intend for the races to mix, as evidenced by the fact that he divided them.”¹² This case became known as *Loving v. Virginia*, in which the Supreme Court banned anti-miscegenation laws in 1967.

The case of Nell Butler, sometimes known as “Irish Nell,” is perhaps the most well-known case of anti-miscegenation legislation. In 1681, while working as an indentured servant in Maryland, Irish Nell fell in love with and married “Negro Charles,” a Black slave. When Nell informed her owner, Lord Baltimore, of her plans, he cautioned her that she and her children were destined to live as slaves. Nell answered, defying her master’s desires, that she would rather marry Charles than Lord Baltimore himself. Nell spent the remainder of her life working for Charles’ owners, most likely as an indentured servant.¹³

Information Institute), accessed June 8, 2022,
<https://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/106/583>

Section 4189 declares that ‘if any white person and any negro, or the descendant of any negro to the third generation, inclusive, though one ancestor of each generation was a white person, intermarry or live in adultery or fornication with each other, each of them must, on conviction, be imprisoned in the penitentiary or sentenced to hard labor for the county for not less than two nor more than seven years.’

¹² *Loving v. Virginia*,” Legal Information Institute (Legal Information Institute), accessed June 8, 2022,
[https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/loving_v_virginia_\(1967\)](https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/loving_v_virginia_(1967)).

¹³ Moran, Rachael, “Love with a Proper Stranger: What Anti-Miscegenation

When discussing the history of anti-miscegenation laws, *Loving v. Virginia* has always been the staple case. But when discussing miscegenation, it is just as important to recognize the significance of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1952-1954), the Supreme Court case that deemed segregation unconstitutional and legalized school integration. Though scholars do not connect *Loving v. Virginia* to *Brown* when discussing miscegenation, their connections are undeniable, so much so that scholars have noted that it could be argued that *Loving v. Virginia* was a continuation of *Brown v. Board*.¹⁴

Miscegenation will always be the elephant when discussing school integration, segregation, and white supremacy. The biggest threat to the Jim Crow South was the fear of blacks and whites mixing socially and intimately.

For white segregationists in the South, removing the racial barriers provided through segregation would harm the preservation of white racial purity. Desegregation in the public school systems would open the door for intimate social relationships between the two races and ultimately break the social system of white supremacy and black inferiority. For these reasons, The *Brown v. Board* decision caused intense uproar and backlash in the South. White Southerners understood that the *Brown* case was about so much more than just education. They knew that the *Brown* decision could deeply transform intimate relations between whites and blacks. Along with a fear of interracial relationships also comes the fear of what these relationships could produce. Individuals born with mixed-race identities had always been a

Laws Can Tell Us About the Meaning of Race, Sex, and Marriage,”
HeinOnline, March 8, 2021,
<https://heinonline.org/HOL/LandingPage?handle=hein.journals%2Fhoflr32&div=60&id=&page=>.

¹⁴ Reginald Oh, “Interracial Marriage in the Shadows of Jim Crow: Racial Segregation as a System of Racial and Gender Subordination,” *UC Davis Law Review* 39 (2006): pp. 1323-1350,
https://doi.org/https://lawreview.law.ucdavis.edu/issues/39/3/defining-voices-critical-race-feminism/davisvol39no3_oh.pdf

problem in American society. In the South, the increased production of mixed-race children threatened to destabilize a system of racial segregation rooted in keeping social relations between blacks and whites separate and distinct. An increased population of mixed-race individuals would make it harder to preserve such racial boundaries. This fear alone fueled resistance and backlash to mixing blacks and whites. The political controversy the Brown case caused was so great, that it could be argued that the supreme court rejected the *Naim v Naim* case a year after Brown was decided (upheld miscegenation laws in Mississippi) because they did not want to cause any more political or social uproar by taking on such a case.¹⁵

In *Naim v. Naim* (1955), a white woman in Virginia sued to have her marriage to her Chinese American husband annulled. Although both were Virginia residents, the couple had traveled to North Carolina to avoid the anti-miscegenation statute of Virginia. The statute also prevented Virginia residents from traveling to another state to marry and did not consider such marriages legal. Because of this, the wife won the case, and the Virginia Supreme Court annulled the marriage and upheld the statute's constitutionality. After this decision, the case was appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, but the higher court denied hearing the case.

Furthermore, the Virginia Supreme Court explained the purpose behind the anti-miscegenation law: preserving white racial purity.¹⁶ The court underscored miscegenation's dangers for the white race and its racial purity. If interracial relationships were legalized, mixed-race couples would procreate and produce a "mongrel breed of people," erasing white racial identity and degrading the integrity of the formerly white population.¹⁷ Although the Brown decision concentrated on the negative effects of racial segregation in education at public schools, segregation did not just work to limit black students' access to higher education. It served as an anti-miscegenation policy as well. Its

¹⁵ Reginald Oh, "Interracial Marriage in the Shadows of Jim Crow."

¹⁶ Reginald Oh, "Interracial Marriage in the Shadows of Jim Crow."

¹⁷ Reginald Oh, "Interracial Marriage in the Shadows of Jim Crow."

overarching goal was to stop interracial relationships from growing in public schools.



Figure 4: A rally against integrating Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1959.

Protestors connected school desegregation to race mixing and race mixing to both communism and “the Anti-Christ.” One case that exemplifies the underlying connection between racial segregation in schools and miscegenation is *Rice v. Gong Lum* (1927).¹⁸ This Court’s reasoning made it clear that racial segregation in public schools was supported by a fundamental policy that forbade interracial marriages and racial mixing. The question of whether a Chinese American girl born in the U.S. should be obliged to attend a white or black public school was presented to the court in the *Gong Lum* case. According to the Mississippi Supreme Court, the Chinese American kid was considered “colored” for constitutional purposes, and the only public school she could attend was one with only black students. The court concluded that Chinese Americans

¹⁸ “*Gong Lum v. Rice*, 275 U.S. 78 (1927),” Justia Law, n.d., <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/275/78/>

should be treated as “colored” for school segregation based on Mississippi’s anti-miscegenation law. Whites and the “Mongolian race” were prohibited from marrying under the anti-miscegenation law. The court detailed the reasoning for their decision as follows:

To all persons acquainted with the social conditions of this state and of the Southern states generally, it is well known that it is the earnest the desire of the white race to preserve its racial integrity and purity, and to maintain the purity of social relations as far as can be done by law. It is known that the dominant purpose of the two sections of the Constitution of our state were to preserve the integrity and purity of the white race. When the public school system was being created, it was intended that the white race should be separated from all other races.¹⁹

In the opinion of the Mississippi Supreme Court, racial segregation in public schools did not serve mainly as an educational purpose. In order to protect white racial purity and white supremacy, racial segregation in public schools served as an anti-miscegenation objective by preventing the emergence of interracial relationships. White Americans across the country saw racial segregation in public schools in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as a crucial strategy for maintaining the purity of the white race.

A California state legislation issued in 1860 forbade members of ethnic minorities from going to school with white children. A California newspaper printed an editorial supporting the segregation law, praising the law’s capacity to “keep our public schools free from the intrusion of the inferior races.”²⁰ It highlighted the anti-miscegenation goals of racially segregating

¹⁹ “Gong Lum v. Rice, 275 U.S. 78 (1927),” Justia Law, n.d.

²⁰ Reginald Oh, “Interracial Marriage in the Shadows of Jim Crow.”

schools:

If we are compelled to have Negroes and Chinamen among us, it is better, of course, that they should be educated. But teach them separately from our children. Let us preserve our Caucasian blood pure. We want no mongrel race of moral and mental hybrids to people the mountains and valleys of California.²¹

Hence, the desire to stop the emergence of intimate relationships between whites and people of color and the goal to racially separate public schools were inextricably linked. The fear of miscegenation was not just in the Jim Crow South but also in Hollywood. The Motion Picture Production Code, often known as the Hays Code, was an extensive set of rules that regulated the content of American movies from the late 1930s through the late 1960s. It was given the name in honor of Will H. Hays the MPPDA's (Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America) then-president. The Hays Code covered a wide range of topics, including depictions of sexuality, violence, and race. The Hays Code significantly contributed to racial segregation and the propagation of racial stereotypes in terms of anti-miscegenation. Any portrayal of interracial relationships or unions was outlawed by the Hays Code. The Hays Code prohibited any favorable depiction or normalization of interracial relationships in movies in order to promote racial segregation and uphold white supremacy. The Hays Code not only outlawed the portrayal of interracial relationships but also promoted racial stereotypes by misrepresenting non-white characters. African Americans, in particular, were often depicted as subservient, docile, and intellectually inferior to white characters. They usually played conventional roles that supported racial hierarchy and white supremacy, such as servants, comedians, or other types of roles.

²¹ Reginald Oh, "Interracial Marriage in the Shadows of Jim Crow."

The code was aggressively enforced from 1934 until the late 1940s, and films that broke it were prevented from being released. This occurred with the 1935 film *Princess Tam Tam*, directed by Josephine Baker and starring the entertainer Black Venus as a mysterious Tunisian woman who becomes a French novelist's muse. The French-made film could not run in most major theaters in the United States because it did not receive a Production Code Administration certificate of approval. Still, it did develop a cult following in independent theaters that catered to black audiences.

While anti-miscegenation laws were used to classify racial differences and create a racial hierarchy between Blacks and Whites in colonial America and the Jim Crow South, they served a different purpose in the case of Asian immigrants who arrived on the West Coast in the mid-to the late 1800s, particularly in California. When gold was discovered in the mid-19th century, the Chinese were the first to arrive in large numbers.²² The Chinese were considered sojourners under the immigration regulations, people who arrived momentarily to work and then returned to their native country. The majority of the migratory workforce was male. Only seven of the 11,794 Chinese in 1852 were female.²³ By 1870, Chinese males outnumbered Chinese women by 14 to 1.²⁴ Because Chinese males were only coming to dig but not to remain, the U.S. authorities explained that they were ineligible for citizenship because they were unassimilable non-White immigrants. Anti-miscegenation laws were not necessary to identify Chinese immigrants as non-White due to these strict immigration regulations. Large groups of foreign males living in bachelor communities, on the other hand, raised concerns about debauched and degraded encounters with White women.

²² Morgan, "Love with a Proper Stranger: What Anti-Miscegenation Laws Can Tell Us About the Meaning of Race, Sex, and Marriage."

²³ Morgan, "Love with a Proper Stranger: What Anti-Miscegenation Laws Can Tell Us About the Meaning of Race, Sex, and Marriage."

²⁴ Morgan, "Love with a Proper Stranger: What Anti-Miscegenation Laws Can Tell Us About the Meaning of Race, Sex, and Marriage."

Intermarriage restrictions were thought to be crucial in expressing the Chinese male racial inferiority by limiting their access to White women.

In 1890, a large number of Japanese immigrants arrived in California.²⁵ Chinese numbers had fallen due to stringent restrictions, but the Japanese flocked from Hawaii and their home country to the West Coast to seek greater economic prospects. The Japanese remained ineligible for citizenship as non-White aliens; as the proportion of women immigrants progressively grew, they formed healthy, self-contained, and self-sufficient communities. Female Japanese immigration increased from 16 percent in 1905 to over 50 percent in 1909.²⁶ By 1920, the gender ratio had dropped to 1.6 to 1, and practically every adult Japanese girl was married.²⁷ The Japanese government had carefully scrutinized the immigrants who came to America to maintain Japan's worldwide image. As a result, arrivals possessed greater literacy rates and resources than their European counterparts.

Many Japanese became successful farmers and small business owners, living in flourishing, prosperous communities with their families. Because of the Japanese's considerable liberty and prosperity, anti-miscegenation laws may appear inconsequential in controlling their sexual and marital behavior. However, the possibility of an independent society of foreigners on American soil sparked a new set of racial anxieties. Some Californians thought Japanese men would use their newfound wealth to claim White women.

A farmer mentioned a Japanese person who lived on an eighty-acre plot of land in California in the early 1920s: "A white woman lives with that Japanese. A baby is in the woman's arms. What is that little one? It's not from Japan. It's not pure

²⁵ Morgan, "Love with a Proper Stranger: What Anti-Miscegenation Laws Can Tell Us About the Meaning of Race, Sex, and Marriage."

²⁶ Morgan, "Love with a Proper Stranger: What Anti-Miscegenation Laws Can Tell Us About the Meaning of Race, Sex, and Marriage."

²⁷ Morgan, "Love with a Proper Stranger: What Anti-Miscegenation Laws Can Tell Us About the Meaning of Race, Sex, and Marriage."

white. That baby, I'll tell you about. It's the seed of the state's most serious problem, making the South's black crisis appear white."²⁸ At the same time, there were profound fears that interracial mingling was as repulsive to Japanese newcomers as it was to White natives: they had no concept of integrating in the sense of amalgamation, and they had immense pride in their race.²⁹

When anti-miscegenation laws were enacted in California, the Japanese found themselves in an odd situation. They were legally barred from mixing with Whites across the color line, but their wealth obscured the gravity of their segregation. Bans on mixing looked as much as a welcoming principle of endogamy as a criminal penalty for exogamy, rather than restricting a racial hierarchy, given the independence and affluence of the "proud Yamato race." Anti-miscegenation laws were rarely used on Native Americans and never Latinos, unlike Blacks and Asians.

The 20th century brought numerous developments that made interracial relationships more acceptable and popular, as well as undermined the United States' racial caste system. Around World War I (1914-1918), the first large-scale African-American migration brought several million African-Americans into Northern states that had never had laws against racial mixing, partially because these Northern areas had never had many African-American citizens. As African-American neighborhoods increased and Whites discovered means to limit their social exposure to Blacks, residential segregation spread in the North. Interracial marriages between whites and non-whites did not start to surge in the United States until after World War II (1939-1945), with the biggest growth occurring after 1960.³⁰

This is largely because the United States organized its

²⁸ Morgan, "Love with a Proper Stranger: What Anti-Miscegenation Laws Can Tell Us About the Meaning of Race, Sex, and Marriage."

²⁹ Morgan, "Love with a Proper Stranger: What Anti-Miscegenation Laws Can Tell Us About the Meaning of Race, Sex, and Marriage."

³⁰ Ella Marie West, "Before 'Loving'," Arts & Sciences at Washington University in St. Louis, December 1, 2017, <https://artsci.wustl.edu/before-loving>

whole society to combat fascism during World War II. Nazi Germany's crimes discredited theories of White biological superiority, which had been used to support anti-miscegenation laws and other discriminatory legislation.³¹ Citizens challenged anti-miscegenation statutes in state courts in the wake of World War II. As a result, the California Supreme Court was the first to declare anti-miscegenation statutes unconstitutional in *Perez v. Sharpe*, a case decided in 1948.³² A dozen states followed California's lead and repealed laws against racial marrying, but several others, primarily in the South, did not.

The United States Supreme Court unanimously held in *Loving v. Virginia*, in 1967, that all remaining state statutes and state constitutional provisions prohibiting intermarriage based on race were unconstitutional and hence unenforceable. However, anti-miscegenation laws remained unenforced for decades until the last of them was repealed in 2000 by a public referendum in Alabama.³³

The United States began to see a "biracial baby boom" in

³¹ Johnson, Stefanie, "Blocking Racial Intermarriage Laws in 1935 and 1937," Seattle's First Civil Rights Coalition, accessed June 8, 2022,

<https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/antimiscegenation.htm>

³² "Perez v. Sharp," Supreme Court of California, accessed June 8, 2022,

<https://scocal.stanford.edu/opinion/perez-v-sharp-26107>. Civil Code, section 69, implements Civil Code, section 60, which provides: "All marriages of white persons with negroes, Mongolians, members of the Malay race, or mulattoes are illegal and void." This section originally appeared in the Civil Code in 1872, but at that time it prohibited marriages only between white persons and Negroes or mulattoes. It [32 Cal.2d 713] succeeded a statute prohibiting such marriages and authorizing the imposition of certain criminal penalties upon persons contracting or solemnizing them. (Stats. 1850, ch. 140, p. 424.) Since 1872, Civil Code, section 60, has been twice amended, first to prohibit marriages between white persons and Mongolians (Stats. 1901, p. 335) and subsequently to prohibit marriages between white persons and members of the Malay race.

³³ Gene Owens, "Alabama Voters to Decide Fate of Miscegenation Ban," The Pew Charitable Trusts, October 23, 2000,

<https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2000/10/23/alabama-voters-to-decide-fate-of-miscegenation-ban>

the late 1960s. Unfortunately, just because interracial marriages were suddenly legal did not mean interracial couples, or their children, were widely accepted in society. This truth was tragically demonstrated in the 1996 instance of a Georgia church whose officials chose to disinter the remains of a mixed-race newborn who had been buried in the church's all-white cemetery. The church eventually reversed their decision and allowed the infant to stay in the family plot after the decision drew national notice and outcry. After refusing to marry the baby's parents, a white lady and a black man, the church made prime-time news again barely a week later.³⁴

Since the outlawing of anti-miscegenation laws, many studies have been conducted to assess the sociological, psychological, and economic effects of anti-miscegenation on perceptions of interracial relationships, race, class, and gender roles in the United States. Ruby Jo Reeves Kennedy was the first American researcher to conduct a thorough examination of historical data on interracial marriage trends. Kennedy utilized marriage license data from New Haven, Connecticut, to argue that the United States was a triple melting pot with deep religious distinctions between Catholics, Protestants, and Jews, rather than a single melting pot into which all ethnic groups were poured and mingled. There were hundreds of religious intermarriages within Kennedy's original sample of over 9,000 marriage records from New Haven between 1870 and 1940, but only five weddings between Whites and Blacks.³⁵

The irony of this study is that interracial marriage had never been outlawed in Connecticut. Still, Kennedy's statistics revealed (and later census data analysis have verified) that racial marriages were uncommon in the past even when it was permitted. Due to the minimal number of racial intermarriages, Kennedy chose to disregard the problem of race and concentrate on

³⁴ Barbara Cruz, "The American Melting Pot? Miscegenation Laws in the United States," JSTOR (Oxford University Press, 2001), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25163474>

³⁵ Cruz, "The American Melting Pot? Miscegenation Laws in the United States."

religious intermarriage. Because the U.S. Census and other official federal surveys do not generally include questions on religion, newer data is difficult to come by; Kennedy's work on religious intermarriage and the triple melting pot remains influential.

Another groundbreaking and frequently quoted work on interracial marriage is Milton Gordon's extensive essay on *Assimilation in American Life*. Gordon claimed that frequent intermarriage between an immigrant group (and their descendants) and the dominant native group was a potent push for deeper assimilation and a definite indicator that the last phases of assimilation had already occurred. Gordon admired how early 20th-century immigrants, primarily from Southern and Eastern Europe, had managed to integrate into American culture, particularly White American society. When the Poles, Italians, and Greeks (among others) initially arrived in the United States, they encountered a lot of prejudice. Still, over three generations, they managed to integrate into the majority White ethnic group. Gordon believed that frequent interracial marriage between early 20th-century immigrant groups (such as Italians, Poles, and Greeks) and already established White ethnic groups (English, Germans, and Irish) was proof that Southern and Eastern European national groups had assimilated into White America.

Though there is a logical connection between anti-miscegenation laws and eugenics, they are distinct in that the goal of anti-miscegenation was to prevent degeneration of the higher (e.g., white) races through social (legal) control. In contrast, eugenics was scientific in nature and sought to promote higher reproduction of people with desired traits (positive eugenics) and reduced reproduction of people with less-desired or undesired traits (negative eugenics). However, during the 20th century, many eugenicists became proponents of anti-miscegenation legislation. The Racial Integrity Act of 1924 in Virginia, for example, was ruled unconstitutional by the United States Supreme Court in 1967 because it had several elements that linked to eugenic concepts.³⁶

³⁶ Wolfe, Brendan, "Racial Integrity Laws (1924–1930)," Encyclopedia

Since 1967, the percentage of new marriages involving partners of different races and ethnicities has climbed fivefold, from 3% in 1967 to 17% in 2015. Interracial marriages have also gained appeal in recent years. For example, the percentage of non-black persons in the United States who said they would oppose a close relative marrying a black spouse fell from 63% in 1990 to 14% in 2016.³⁷

Interracial marriages are on the rise, according to social scientists, as a sign of the shrinking social barrier between racial and ethnic groupings. They argue that crossing racial/ethnic lines for marriage indicates that individuals of different racial groupings recognize each other as “social equals.” Even though attitudes about interracial marriage have improved and the number of interracial marriages has grown, interracial couples continue to face familial resistance, ostracism, and hostility from strangers and neighbors.³⁸

Worldwide sentiments regarding other people’s interracial partnerships are far more positive than attitudes toward their or a family member’s interracial relationships. Even if they believe interracial marriages are a “positive thing for society,” some people may reject a close relative’s marrying.

Some parents may reject their children’s intermarriage because they are concerned that their in-laws, with whom they appear to have nothing in common, would not understand them.

Virginia, accessed June 8, 2022, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/racial-integrity-laws-1924-1930/>.

³⁷ Rosenfeld, Michael, “The Racial Caste System,” *The Racial Caste System* (Stanford University Press), accessed June 8, 2022, https://web.stanford.edu/~mrosenfe/Rosenfeld_Intermarriage_Sage_Encyclopedia.pdf.

³⁸ Livingston, Gretchen, “Public Views on Intermarriage,” Pew Research Center’s Social & Demographic Trends Project (Pew Research Center, May 30, 2020), <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2017/05/18/2-public-views-on-intermarriage/>.

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Author Bio

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Seeking Social Justice in the City of Los Angeles: Mary Julia Workman

By Jose Luis Castro Padilla

Abstract: Mary Julia Workman (1871–1964) was a Catholic social activist in the early twentieth century. She was the founder of the Brownson Settlement House in Los Angeles established in 1902. By the twentieth century, during the Progressive Era (1896–1916), Workman led a group of volunteer women to help immigrants, the majority being Mexicans, who were segregated and discriminated against in the growing city of Los Angeles, California. Although Catholic activism was influenced by the Protestant Progressive ideology, Workman provided social justice to the marginalized communities with education, health, and job training. In a time when Americanization efforts imposed by conservative and nationalist religious groups on immigrants brought antagonism, racism, and discrimination to the diverse communities of Los Angeles, Mary Julia Workman and her Americanization methodology focused on learning from a foreign culture and adapting it to American society rather than removing cultural identity and heritage. After years of service, Workman left her position as the president of the Brownson House due to the religious bureaucracy at the Archdiocese of Los Angeles but never stopped fighting for social justice. Mary Julia spent her whole life devoted to learning, understanding, and fighting for marginalized and discriminated individuals. Her contributions may have been forgotten, but her devotion will live on.

Introduction

The suffering of the world is better understood together with those who suffer.

- Pope Francis (2021)¹

Through encyclicals and messages, Pope Francis (b. 1935) has proclaimed to look for social justice in the world to counteract materialism and individualism propagated by consumerism and globalization. To contribute to that search, the life and social activism of Mary Julia Workman (1871–1964) must be recognized by society and used as an example of providing social justice to people in need. One hundred and twenty years ago, a Catholic woman who was influenced by the Progressive Era (1896-1916) of the early twentieth century brought social justice to the poor in the city of Los Angeles. During her time at the Brownson Settlement House, Workman was a forerunner of social justice within the Catholic Church providing education, employment, and public health to hundreds of immigrants, who lived segregated and marginalized in the city of Los Angeles. Although her story has since been forgotten in the library archives, during her time, Mary Julia Workman was recognized for her altruistic work and political activism by various local civil authorities, politicians, and important figures of society.

In 1964, Mary Julia Workman passed away at the age of ninety-three. Although her life was filled with love for the poor and oppressed; the place where she now rests, Calvary Cemetery in East Los Angeles looks dusty, old, lonely, and forgotten by both the church and civil society of Los Angeles. Despite her accomplishments and accolades, Californians have no knowledge regarding her public life, civic service, and social work during the early twentieth century. Her death made headlines as her social

¹ Pope Francis, “A Poderosos de la Tierra,” *Vatican News*, Dicasterium pro Communicatione, October 16, 2021, <https://www.vaticannews.va/es/papa/news/2021-10/papa-poderosos-tierra-nombre-dios-cambien-sistema-muerte.html>.

activism was remembered. Today, however, the official history books of the Catholic Church in California have underrepresented her social work and contributions to the city of Los Angeles; therefore, the civil and ecclesiastical recognition she once received for her dedication to the pursuit of social justice among the poor has been forgotten.

A Brief History of Mary Julia Workman

Workman was an upper-class woman, born from a wealthy family and educated from an early age by her mother, Maria Elizabeth Boyle (1847–1933), under the strict Catholic faith. Mary Julia Workman’s father, William Henry Workman (1839–1918), was the youngest son of David Workman (1797–1855). When David was fifteen years old, his father passed away soon after their migration to California. To financially support his mother, William began working in different clerk positions throughout Los Angeles; additionally, he worked as a messenger that traveled from Los Angeles to San Bernardino, California on horseback.² David would go on to open a saddlery shop with his brother Elijah, and they became successful businessmen on Main Street.

Mary J. Workman’s mother, Maria Elizabeth, lived with her father, Andrew Boyle. The Boyles were one of the most influential families within the city of Los Angeles during the late nineteenth century, as they were able to achieve the “American Dream” during the Gold Rush (1848-1855).³ As an Irish Catholic

² William Henry Workman, Series 1: Mary Julia Workman, box 1 and folder 2, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University, 1.

³ Maria Elizabeth Workman, Series 1: Mary Julia Workman, box 1 and folder 2, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University, 1. Her grandfather was Andrew A. Boyle (1818–1871), a pioneer and Irish immigrant, who came to Los Angeles during the United States’ expansion into the West during the Gold Rush (1848–1855). California was a fertile land available to immigrants from Europe and Asia and migrants from the American Midwest,

woman, she attended school at Sister of Charity Church in Los Angeles. At that time, Maria Elizabeth recalled that “there were no bridges, in those days across the Los Angeles River which was a lovely pastoral stream bordered by willow trees.”⁴ Maria learned Spanish as it was spoken by almost all the inhabitants of the town. She was a devoted Catholic who made her First Communion and was confirmed in this historic old church of Los Angeles. According to her writings, she went to San Francisco in 1864 to study at the Clark’s Institute from which she graduated a year and a half later and returned to Los Angeles.⁵ Three years later, on October 17, 1867, she married William H. Workman, and together they raised seven children on the east side of the Los Angeles River.

Maria Elizabeth gave birth to her second child and first daughter on January 4, 1871, in the old Boyle brick house in Los Angeles. Mary Julia’s siblings were Andrew (n.d.), Elizabeth (n.d.), William H. Jr (n.d.), Charlotte (n.d.), Gertrude (n.d.), and Thomas (n.d.). Her mother was a housewife, and her father was a businessman who became mayor of Los Angeles from 1887 to 1888. Although her father was Protestant, her mother raised her under the Roman Catholic faith. Her First Communion took place at the old plaza church of Our Lady of Los Angeles, and her elementary education occurred at the Sister of Charity Church grammar school at the corner of Macy and Alameda Street.⁶ Every morning she crossed the east side of the Los Angeles River, the same river her mom crossed, from El Paredon Blanco to go to school. Workman remembered, “The horse was so reliable that Charlie Parker, the driver, would tie the reins, and sit with us

and Andrew Boyle did not miss the opportunity to seek his fortune in Southern California.

⁴ Maria Elizabeth Workman, Series 1, 1.

⁵ Maria Elizabeth Workman, Series 1, 2.

⁶ “Miss Mary, 91: ‘Mother’ to L.A.’S Children,” Series 1: Mary Julia Workman, box 2 and folder 11, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University, 1.

children, reciting poetry and telling stories, for the long homeward pull up Alison Street.”⁷

Mary Julia’s mother decided to send her away for higher education, as Los Angeles did not have a high school dedicated to girls, she decided to send her daughters, Mary Julia and Elizabeth, to Oakland to attend Convent of Our Lady of Sacred Heart of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary.⁸ The high school of choice for wealthy families to send their daughters since it had a good curriculum consisting of music, writing, and school training such as spirituality and bible studies.⁹ Workman graduated in 1890 and returned to Los Angeles where she was responsible for helping her mother at home and caring for her younger siblings. She helped her mother with the weekly cleaning and dusting of the house and was referred to as “Little Mother” by her young siblings because she demonstrated the same love and care that her mother did.¹⁰

Her dad did not permit her desire to serve God and her vocation. When she asked her father for permission to join a religious order and become a Catholic nun her father replied, “I can’t give my permission to let my little girl leave our home to do that. But you may use your mind and your heart to do anything you wish in this city, but I can’t agree to let you join an order.”¹¹ Besides being a protective patriarchal father, Mr. Workman did not grow up within the Catholic faith but rather in the Protestant faith and did not support the idea of having a nun in the family. She had

⁷ Miss Mary, 1. El Paredon Blanco is today the neighborhood of Boyle Heights.

⁸ Michael E. Engh. “Mary Julia Workman, the Catholic Conscience of Los Angeles.” *California History* 72, no. 1, (1993), 5.

⁹ Michael E. Eng. “Responding to Urban Poverty: Mary Julia Workman and Brownson Settlement House of Los Angeles, 1900-1920” Series 1: box 2 and folder 12, Workman Research Materials CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University, 4.

¹⁰ Thomas Edgar Workman, *Memoirs*, Series 1: box 1 and folder 1, Workman Research Materials CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University, 4.

¹¹ Oral Interview to Beatrice (Ward) Challis done by Fr. Michael Engh S.J. May, 21, 1993. Series 2, box 4, folder 4, Workman Research Material.

the desire to be a nun due to the education she had received, her experiences in the convent, and her friendship with the sisters who lived there because they changed her life and left lasting impressions. In the letters written to her friend and composition teacher, Sister Mary Leopold, Mary Julia writes, “I am more desirous of my holy vocation and more grateful to God for calling me to Himself.”¹² However, her father did not want to let Mary Julia go beyond the boundaries of Los Angeles and pursue a religious vocation.

The love she had for children led to her aspiration to become a kindergarten teacher. In 1899, she enrolled in the State Normal School, which today is called the University of California, Los Angeles. Under strict responsibility and school duties, she took several classes from English to psychology, of which she learned Froebel’s Kindergarten Theory.¹³ In a beautiful building of the State Normal School on 5th Street and Grand Avenue in Los Angeles, she was trained to be a future educator. She recalled, “I thought I knew something of Kindergarten Work, but I knew nothing. It is marvelous work and requires so much of a Teacher that I feel I can never accomplish such great results.”¹⁴ She understood how difficult the profession was and the physical, mental, and spiritual exhaustion that teaching caused. As part of her education, she was taught the theory of early education created by Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852), a lesson that Mary Julia would use as part of the foundation for her social work.¹⁵ Workman stated

¹² Mary’s Letter LVI, *Golden Friendship*, 159. Series 2, box 3 and folder 1, Workman Research Materials, CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University. The Holy Names Graduates and teacher’s letters were collected and edited by Sister Mary Leopold.

¹³ Mary’s Letter LXI, *Golden Friendship*, 167.

¹⁴ Mary’s Letter LXII, *Golden Friendship*, 169.

¹⁵ “Froebel considered the whole child’s health, physical development, the environment, emotional well-being, mental ability, social relationships and spiritual aspects of development as important. Drawing on his mathematical and scientific knowledge Froebel developed a set of gifts (wooden blocks 1-6) and introduced occupations, (including sticks, clay, sand, slates, chalk, wax, shells,

that, “Froebel leads you so to God as the source of all, he makes you reach out for the child’s soul which is so sacred in his eyes.”¹⁶ Froebe’s methodology consisted of respect for the child’s freedom. He argued that with games, children develop forms of creative activity; he taught that children should have the opportunity to express themselves. With this method, the child developed activities with her mother and in a group to project the inner states of the child to the outside world. Under Froebel’s principles, the kindergarten developed language activities, games, crafts, and art that provided mental development for the child at an early age.¹⁷ Workman learned Froebel’s methodology and how the mental, physical, and spiritual state was important for everyone within the community and oneness with God.¹⁸ Workman believed in the freedom of will, individual responsibility, the necessity of sacrifice, the beauty of unselfishness, and the value of love in everything people do and speak. She believed that learning and teaching all of those virtues were necessary.

She began to combine her faith with her vocation, writing, “I feel that childhood is a sacred time, the seed time of a life and it is the seed of life.”¹⁹ She believed that children need to learn at a young age how human integrity could contribute to their development for their own benefit and society. For Workman, the teachings at the State Normal School resembled the philosophy of charity that she had previously learned at the convent. Through her lessons, she wanted to teach infants the true meaning of “give.”

stones, scissors, paper folding).” Friedrich Froebel, *Early Education*, The British Association for Early Childhood Education, accessed November 01, 2021.

<https://www.early-education.org.uk/about-froebel>

¹⁶ Mary’s Letter LXIII, *Golden Friendship*, 173.

¹⁷ Wilson Stuart. “The ‘Gifts’ of Friedrich Froebel.” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 26, no. 4 (1967): 238–41.

¹⁸ Patricia L. de Cos, *History and Development of Kindergarten in California*, California Research Bureau, California State Library, 08. accessed: November 01, 2021,

<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.193.5931&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

¹⁹ “Mary’s Letter LXIII”, *Golden Friendship*, 172.

Seeking Social Justice

During her school days at Normal School, Mary Julia decided to associate with the Catholic Aid Society and volunteer in the Catholic charity house, El Hogar Feliz.²⁰ During her college years, a group of students at the State Normal School began recruiting volunteers for the new College Settlement House Association, and she did not hesitate to become one of their members.



Figure 1: Mary Julia Workman, sitting second from the left, at the Academy of Our Lady of Sacred Heart. Circa 1890 Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.

²⁰ Society of El Hogar Feliz translates to Happy Home, an organization founded to care for abandoned and neglected children in Los Angeles.



Figure 2. Mary Julia Workman Diploma. Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University

The Settlement House Movement

The Settlement House Movement, which began in the 1880s and peaked during the 1920s, was promoted by college women in the most influential and industrialized cities of the United States. Cities began to suffer an increase in industrialization, thus creating the need to employ more laborers. Men, women, and children worked tirelessly in factories that economically flourished in urban communities. Immigration increased after the American Civil War (1861–1865), which served as fuel for large factories that requested cheap labor due to the United States' economic growth. Sadly, many lower-class industrial workers could not reach greater social and economic statuses due to the complexity of industrial capitalism. In Chicago, social worker Jane Addams (1860–1935) noticed the increase in immigrants, and she observed how they suffered from labor abuse and economic deprivation. Based on her

observations, Adams decided to start a movement within Social Progressivism, the settlement house movement, which provided services such as English classes, and health care to communities who otherwise would not be able to afford it. The help which was given primarily to immigrants gradually spread to the ranks of professional social workers, and settlement houses were established in several industrial cities across the United States such as Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles.

Protestant settlement houses worked across the country helping immigrants, along with performing religious proselytization. Charity was transformed into Christian evangelization and nationalist doctrine for all those with sufficient characteristics to be accepted by Anglo-American society. Historian John Hingham writes that, “until the end of the nineteenth-century social work had been largely synonymous with charity, and for the most part its practitioners had loudly bewailed the immigrant grant flood that was swapping their resources.”²¹ In the industrial cities of the United States, settlement houses became notorious because young college women decided to lead this progressive idea. Historian William Deverell stated, “remarkable middle- and upper-class women working at settlement houses for immigrants taught and witnessed Americanization.”²²

Addams extolled the virtues of ongoing cultural differences among immigrant groups, but she encouraged the assimilation of immigrants to Anglo-American culture. She became a leader in the settlement house movement and traveled around the nation giving speeches about her activism. In 1894, a group of college women graduates listened to Addams in Los Angeles. Addams influenced the group of college-educated women to follow in her steps in the creation of the first settlement houses in Los Angeles. The settlement house movement came to Los Angeles as a functional

²¹ John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925*, (New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press, 2002), Kindle.

²² William Deverell, *Whitewashed Adobe: The Rise of Los Angeles and the Remaking of its Mexican Past*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 71.

duty for college women to serve the community providing food, healthcare, religious proselytism, and assimilation to American culture. Ran by college-educated women near La Plaza, the College Settlement House in Los Angeles was founded in 1894. Working from Castellar Street, the College Settlement Association began to recruit student volunteers from the State Normal School. Workman became one of the volunteers in this settlement house during her school years and argued that “college-trained women used their intelligence and their educational opportunity to aid in the solution of community problems.”²³ It was during the Progressive Era that a generation of educated women started campaigns to help their community without getting involved in politics, from which they were excluded. They were able to get involved in women’s clubs and other activities such as education, which was deemed appropriate for women. As a volunteer at the College Settlement House, Workman was able to observe the poverty of the people living in Sonoratown and other impoverished communities near La Plaza where volunteers conducted their social work. Besides the College Settlement House, Protestant women’s groups began to open settlement houses around the central plaza. The women and houses they represented were able to embrace Russian, French, Armenian, Italian, and other European immigrants, but failed to expand their social work in the Mexican community due to their strong religious beliefs and conflicting cultural traditions.

Although Workman’s influence was Progressive Activism, she began to distance herself from groups, such as the women’s clubs who began spreading hate against immigrants and boasted their superiority against others. Women’s clubs, like Friday Women’s Club and other Progressive activists, celebrated the United States’ conquest of the Southwest. Historian Gayle Gullett stated, “The women declared themselves patriots of white

²³ Michael E. Engh, “A Better Realization of Social Justice: Mary Julia Workman, Los Angeles Progressive,” Serie 1, Box 2, Folder 9, Workman Research Materials, CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.

America. The United States was correct in appropriating Mexican land because this meant the victory of ‘civilization’ over ‘barbarism,’ of an advanced ‘white’ race over those backward races, Indian and Mexican, who stood in the way of Manifest Destiny.”²⁴ The idealism of the Progressive Movement set aside immigrant minorities and based its rhetoric on Anglo-Saxon religious and ethnic fundamentalism. In Los Angeles, citizens of the lower classes such as Mexicans were excluded from this Progressive Movement, although their rhetoric was portrayed as welfare for all. The College Settlement House was an instrument not to help immigrants, but to help the Anglo-American community in its efforts to reform those deemed as criminals or inferior.

Having been born and raised in Los Angeles, Workman noticed the changes that the city underwent through the years. “From a quiet pastoral pueblo, it had developed into a great city, stretching out in all directions,” wrote Mary Julia Workman when describing her hometown. She also observed, “An industrial district and a turmoil in traffic replaced the vineyards and the beautiful pioneer estates by the river.”²⁵ The city had grown, and new inhabitants arrived, not only those seeking better lives, but corporations seeking riches. Workman noted “the streets full of ragged children of foreign aspect.”²⁶ In describing the streets of Los Angeles, she elaborated that “dark, skinned, barefoot boys and girls who speak the sweet language of Spain...women with rebozos over their heads and babies in their arms, swarthy Mexican labors returning from work, all will pass one on the way.”²⁷ The

²⁴ Gayle Gullett, *Becoming Citizens: The Emergence and Development of the California Women’s Movement* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 124. Progressive activists in the 1900s wanted to end political corruption, improve people’s lives, and increase government intervention to protect citizens.

²⁵ Mary Julia Workman, “Brownson House Settlement Work,” *The Tidings*, Series 2, Box 3, Folder 8, Workman Research Materials, CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University, 1.

²⁶ Mary Julia Workman, “Brownson House Settlement Work,” 1.

²⁷ Mary Julia Workman, “Brownson House Settlement Work,” 1.

Mexican immigrants that she described lived hidden in poverty and segregated, or as a city official described it, “out of sight in the brush.”²⁸ The need to create a Catholic Settlement House to reach the impoverished Catholics began in 1901.



Figure 3. Mary Julia Workman. Circa 1885. Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University

²⁸ Deverell, *Whitewashed Adobe*, 110.



Figure 4. Mary Julia (Center) at College Settlement House. Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University

Social Justice In the Brownson House

Mary Julia Workman was in a meeting with the Ladies' Aid Society at Saint Vibiana's Cathedral, when priest, John J. Clifford (n.d.), suggested they establish a Catholic social workforce in the community, which began to work on the foundation of a Catholic settlement house in Los Angeles. Influenced by the Progressive Movement and inspired by the encyclical written by the Pope Leon XIII (1878–1903) entitled *Rerum Novarum*, the Brownson Settlement House was founded in 1901.²⁹

Brownson Settlement House started with a Sunday School program, led by volunteers and professionals and then introduced programs to improve living conditions at homes in the community. By September 1901, volunteers started making home visits with an

²⁹ In this apostolic letter, *Rerum Novarum*, Pope Leo XIII called his parishioners to take a social attitude in the world. Besides the right to private property, and labor rights, the encyclical calls for civil associations for mutual aid.

average of 200 home visits in the neighborhoods each month.³⁰ Young immigrant women were taught housekeeping, washing, ironing, sewing, and cooking while young men were taught carpentry, for furniture making, and equipment was provided for them to use in their homes. Volunteers educated groups at the Brown Settlement House with various handy-work skills to be able to work in the factories. Workman stated that “the Settlement, based upon the principle of the unity of society, the brotherhood of many as an effort to overcome the segregation which takes place in modern centers of population where privileged and unprivileged classes become more and more widely separated by conditions of life.”³¹

On January 8, 1905, a new Brownson Settlement House building was inaugurated by Bishop Thomas Conaty (1847-1915) located at 711 Jackson Street in Los Angeles. The settlement house welcomed people from all nationalities and religions. Part of that inclusivity was neighborhood bathhouses where mothers could bring their families for weekly baths; mothers could bring their children to be examined by doctors, and they learned how to take care of not only themselves during pregnancy but their little ones.³² There were no religious obligations or requirements on who could benefit from Brownson services, religious rights were respected with no forced religious activities and the doors were open to any religious group. In this respect, the organization’s aim was to do constructive social work providing services such as health care and education. Their attendance was up to 1,000 visitors per week on average. This was due to the settlement house providing educational opportunities for children, a playground for children to

³⁰ “Know Your CYO,” Series 2, Box 3, Folder 9, Workman Research Materials, CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University, 2.

³¹ Maria Julia Workman, “The Brownson House,” 2.

³² “Seeking Aid for Babies,” Los Angeles Times, May 17, 1915, Series 2, Box 3, Folder 5, Workman Research Materials, CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.

run around in, and milk distributions on behalf of the Municipal Child Welfare.

Volunteers provided job training for immigrants in addition to education and public health services. Workman stated, “Brownson House sees the need of developing workshops for industrial training along with practical work where unskilled adults who are handicapped or by the lack of skill or by ignorance of the language, etc., could secure suitable employment due developing a measure of efficiency.”³³ Unemployed immigrants, often Mexicans, gathered in a small park North of the plaza, meeting in great numbers, in hopes that a potential employer would hire them from the crowd.³⁴ Workman walked these streets and saw firsthand how Mexican workers were waiting to be hired. In most cases, they did not possess the necessary skills to work in factories and were hired in underpaid jobs. Their wages were small, but they were satisfied with steady employment.³⁵ Common among the immigrants was illiteracy, which meant they could not read, or speak English. Workman appealed to both the private and public sectors by writing in the Catholic magazine, *The Tidings*, in which she implored the readers to consider a solution to the problem of immigrant unemployment. Workman wrote, “This matter of Mexican unemployment has hardly been approached in Los Angeles and should be a matter of immediate and most serious consideration. It will have to be worked out by some public agency on a large scale with the cooperation of the public and private

³³ Mary Julia Workman, “Brownson House: A Centre of Social Service,” *The Tidings*, 59, Series 2, Box 3, Folder 8, Workman Research Material, CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.

³⁴ Estrada, *The Los Angeles Plaza*, 116.

³⁵ John Emmanuel Kynlee, *Housing Conditions Among the Mexican Population of Los Angeles*, A Thesis Presented to the Department of Sociology, University of Southern California, April 27, 1912. Workman Research Materials, Series 2, Box 5, Folder 1, CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.

forces of the community.”³⁶ She encouraged lay people’s work, as she stated that “there is a distinct need for Catholic men and women who will give personal service in constructive social work among the poor and foreign population.”³⁷

When the Mexican Revolution (1910–1920) began, the population of Mexicans in the United States increased to 70,000 in 1915. Mexican immigrants arrived in the city looking for a place to live and work and they had a lack of health services, education, and work. Workman wrote, “The fact remains that foreign-born poor of our faith need special adequate work under Catholic auspices. We, Catholic lay workers, should be the first to recognize their need and the first to come to their assistance.”³⁸ For Workman the problem was not immigration, but rather how those immigrants adapted to a society that closed its doors to them. Workman’s suggestion for this problem was teaching how to survive in an Anglo-American society that kept marginalized communities cornered in a miserable way of life.

In the view of Workman, the Catholic Church forgot its mission to protect the poor. Workman wrote to her friend, Sister M. Leopold (n.d.), about her belief:

When a man or a woman is hungry, overworked or exploited, you cannot teach Catechism to him, you must first remedy his condition. When children live with eight or nine people in one room, you cannot expect the grace of First Communion to perform a miracle in every individual case and keep them decently moral.³⁹

³⁶ Mary Julia Workman, “Brownson House: A Centre of Social Service,” *The Tidings*, 59.

³⁷ Mary’s Letter XCIX, *Golden Friendship*, 232.

³⁸ Mary Julia Workman, “Brownson House; a Social Service Center,” *The Tidings*, 1916, 31.

³⁹ Mary’s Letter LXXXI, *Golden Friendship*, 210.

The relationship Workman had with the immigrant community led her to criticize the social situation in Mexico, as she wrote:

Catholic people and press, in their talk about Mexico, express no sympathy or interest in the political reform needed in Mexico, or in the achievement of liberty by the enslaved people of that unhappy land. Their only idea is the enforced subjection of the people in order that Church property and institutions may enjoy temporary security. It would be a false security, and a temporary one as history proves.⁴⁰

She saw people coming to Los Angeles, who were poor and sick who would later become her neighbors, students, and friends. She noticed and acknowledged the long struggle of the Mexican people toward the attainment of freedom and justice in Mexico. The Church saw only its interests which included safeguarding its power, and assets after the 1910s Mexican Revolution. From Workman's perspective, the Church in Mexico lacked social justice; she criticized the Church by writing, "Men cannot be economically enslaved and religiously free."⁴¹ She proclaimed, "The Church is eminently right in maintaining her freedom from governmental control, but she will be robbed of her influence if she is not associated in this instance with constructive plans for human betterment. At least, her influence should be clearly toward advancement in the realization of social justice and true liberty."⁴² To her, the Church began meddling in political conflicts leaving aside its true mission of social work, which is to promote the common good. Additionally, the Church ignored the needs of the people, even those who began following the anarchists and

⁴⁰ Mary's Letter CIV, Golden Friendship, 255.

⁴¹ Mary Julia Workman Letter to Bishop Cantwell, January 17, 1927, Series 1: Mary Julia Workman, Folder 1, box 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.

⁴² Mary Julia Workman Letter to Bishop Cantwell, January 17, 1927.

socialists who promised a just society with bloody revolutions for those who have been oppressed by the government and wealthy institutions.



Figure 6. Brownson House Volunteers, Nurses and Doctors, Circa 1916. Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University

Socialism, Anarchism, and Americanization

Socialist and anarchist ideologies began to spread in Los Angeles in the late 1890s by Italian and Russian exiles, who took refuge in the city. As historian George Sanchez writes, “They brought with them leftist ideologies of anarchism, socialism, communism, or communitarianism, that would flourish in Boyle Heights in various labor unions and political organizations.”⁴³ This ideology against American capitalism and religion began to arrive in Los Angeles due to the teachings of ideologists such as the Mexican Anarchist,

⁴³ George J. Sánchez, *Boyle Heights: How a Los Angeles Neighborhood Became the Future of American Democracy*. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2021), 46.

Ricardo Flores Magon (1873-1922) who criticized the economic system of the United States and tried to arm a guerilla in Southern California with the ultimate goal of invading Mexicali and other Mexican border cities. Magon criticized the mistreatment of workers by US employers and stressed the importance of having a society free of political institutions and economically autonomous. The Partido Liberal Mexicano (PLM) incited the uprising against the bourgeoisie.⁴⁴ These acts alarmed the American government which decided to detain Ricardo Flores Magon in 1917.

Workman believed that this radical form of socialism and anarchism [that Ricardo Flores Magon incited] did not help the immigrants living in poverty. The poverty-stricken communities lacked social justice essentials such as education, healthcare, work, and fair housing. She argued that socialism came to destroy the essential values of society, such as the family. Workman wrote that “ideas are weapons and knowledge is power. During the past century, the weapon of false ideas has taken the arsenal of the human mind and turned against the children of God.”⁴⁵ She firmly stated that socialism and anarchism were the enemies of Christianity, though ironically, she sought to create awareness of social work and provide those in need with public services.

Mary Julia wanted all members of the Church to come together to give charity to those deemed the most in need: men and women in industries and urban settings. She sought to bring social leaders and priests together by organizing social activities with Catholic women who would be leading constructive missions in communities.⁴⁶ Influenced by the *Rerum Novarum* encyclical written by Pope Leon XIII, Workman wanted to reach every corner

⁴⁴ Ricardo Romo, *East Los Angeles: History of a Barrio* (TX: University of Texas Press, 1983), 94.

⁴⁵ Mary Julia Workman Letter. Serie 1: Mary Julia Workman, Box 2, Folder 20, Workman Family Papers. CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.

⁴⁶ Mary J. Workman, “Brownson House Settlement Work,” *The Tidings*, Series 1: Mary Julia Workman, Box 4, Folder 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.

of the city and bring social justice to the poor. As it is written in the Pope's letter, "God himself seems to incline to those who suffer misfortune; for Jesus Christ calls the poor blessed."⁴⁷

The social justice work carried out by Workman was based on her Christian belief that charity was to go primarily to those who were the neediest. She stated that the social reform done by the layman Catholic cannot be perfect, but they "can always strive to raise the social standard of living and give equal opportunities."⁴⁸ As she witnessed the many impoverished immigrants walking on the dusty streets of Los Angeles, she saw socialist ideologies growing in the city. As she noted, "In theory one would think that the weapon of atheism, and therefore materialism, could not be used successfully to destroy the traditional concept of man, all the more so since in scriptural language the man is a fool who says there is not God."⁴⁹ The Russian and Mexican revolutions had socialist overtones that were at their peak in 1917 when the First World War(1914-1918) in Europe began in 1914. Along with propaganda, such as revolutionary radical socialist books and pamphlets, the revolutions began to concern the US government and the mainstream capitalistic society because it was spreading in the industrial cities. This resulted in the increase of Americanization programs throughout the country, aimed at assimilating immigrants in the United States by removing any socialist or anarchist ideologies.

Americanization and social work went hand in hand at the Settlement House. Contrary to the historical narrative of Progressives leaders being educated, Anglo-Protestant, middle-

⁴⁷ Pope Leo XIII. Vatican, *Rerum Novarum: Encyclical Di Leone XIII Sulla Questione Operaia*. Lugano: Edizione a cura dell' Organizzazione cristano-sociale del canton Ticino per la celebrazione del LXX, 1961, https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum.html (accessed July 4, 2021).

⁴⁸ Mary's Letter LXXXI, *Golden Friendship*, 210.

⁴⁹Mary Julia Workman Letter. Serie 1: Mary Julia Workman, Box 2, Folder 20, Workman Family Papers. CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.

class people, Workman was a Catholic woman who led groups of women focused on helping immigrants seek social justice through humanitarian work which encompassed health, education, and labor freedoms. With her methods of cultural integration and social understanding, Workman was able to develop an Americanization program to implement among the Mexican immigrant community contrary to the mentality of conservative nativists that ignored and suppressed them in lower socioeconomic conditions. Workman suggested that people living in the United States needed to Americanize themselves to determine what kind of a person they should be. Workman wrote:

Brownson House is valuable to the community because it lives and labor close contact with its neighbors in the foreign sections of Los Angeles and gets their point of view because it develops a sympathetic co-operative effort which is the best mean for social advance because it is a neighborhood center for social, educational and preventive work.⁵⁰

Workman and the Brownson House volunteers used cultural integration methods during the teaching of the program, as they spoke Spanish, they provided history and civic classes to immigrants in their native languages to help them better understand the material. Workman always sought to empower the education of children at the Brownson House; she did this by encouraging them to read, and play learning games which helped their educational development. The Brownson library received up to 400 books for children's education, a portion of those books were in Spanish, used by Mexican children, which were donated by fellow Catholics. Workman was able to demonstrate that the

⁵⁰ Mary Julia Workman, "A Social Service Center," *The Tidings*, 1916, Box 14ov, Folder 08, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Series 2, Box 4, Folder 14, Workman Research Materials, CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.

national narratives surrounding a lack of intelligence, interests, and abilities that existed for immigrant Mexican children were wrong and due to the racial bias, that was originated by the ruling Anglo-American class. Public schools in Los Angeles segregated Mexican students from the rest of the children and demonstrated their bias on racial inferiority by modifying the students' curriculum, which emphasized gendered manual and domestic training for low-paying jobs rather than higher education for economic freedoms. Segregated classrooms were filled with underqualified teachers and the schools were in substandard facilities, which were poorly equipped with none of the necessary educational tools. The physical and intellectual space of schools became as segregated as the students. Mexican and Mexican-American students could not climb in society, based on a foundation of inequality due to systematic racism that was reinforced in the classroom. The language, hygiene, and special needs of Mexican students were the main reasons why segregation was practiced. Education such as after-school tutoring and book clubs were supplemented within Brownson House as Workman had the vision to not underestimate minorities and championed giving them the space and opportunity to learn and work for the common good in society.

Workman knew that education could open the doors for marginalized and oppressed young people in a systematically racist society that abandoned them and as a result, she pushed for Brownson House to be an educational space for families. Brownson House was open for teenagers and children seeking educational opportunities. Workman noted this when writing:

Brownson House is able to furnish dreams and air castles for children who live in mere shacks and have so little of material luxury is rather significant. It is the dream that helps one to live down the unhappy present condition; it is the dream that helps one to rise and find that air castle in some form or other later on. It is therefore significant that our

Mexicans are given an opportunity to dream and live-in castles in the sky, and one day from those dreams they will rise up above the shacks into the realms of the America's highest ideals.⁵¹

Workman further explained that the "Brownson House remembers this great basic fact in all its efforts for Americanization and seeks to preserve and strengthen the religious faith and practice of immigrants as the basis of good citizenship."⁵² William J. Denney (n.d), from The Charity Organization Society, wrote that:

[He] was very impressed with the progressive spirit of these Catholic social workers. As for Brownson House, no social worker can visit it and talk with Miss Workman without coming away with the feeling that here is a social institution worthwhile, and that is designed to meet a real need and that is trying to give the best possible measure of genuine service.⁵³

In the end, boys and girls who grew up in the House's playgrounds wrote letters remembering the days of joys with volunteers and other children. Workman claimed that the "Brownson House has succeeded in listening to the beating hearts of a foreign people during the past years and with close attention has tried to provide correct channels for their repressed emotions can best be understood."⁵⁴

⁵¹ Mary Workman, Brownson House, November 22, 1919.

⁵² "Brownson House: A Centre of Americanization," 48.

⁵³ William J. Denney, "The Charity Organization Society," to Rev. Joseph S. Glass, Feb. 12, 1917. Series 1: Mary Julia Workman, Box 1, Folder 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Series 2, Box 4, Folder 14, Workman Research Materials, CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.

⁵⁴ Mary Workman, *Brownson House*, November 22, 1919.



Figure 7. Children at the Brownson Settlement House Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University



Figure 8. Classroom in the Brownson Settlement House. Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University

The Brownson House promoted unity and respect of Mexican immigrant culture and traditions because Workman looked beyond the societal narratives and included the value and contribution of immigrants to American society. She did not tolerate the prejudicial attitudes of racial superiority that were growing throughout the city and state. Growing up and working with minorities on the Eastside of Los Angeles allowed Workman to learn their language, culture, and traditions from them. She not only embraced Mexican Catholics, but she also worked hard to help other minorities living in Los Angeles.

During the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic in Los Angeles, monetary support was low because of World War I and anti-immigrant rhetoric in the city. The lack of monetary support included a lack of donations, especially for the Brownson House because many Americans did not want to help Mexican settlements due to a growing fear of their socialist ideology spreading from Mexico during the Mexican Revolution and causing the “Brown Scare,” stigmatizing all Mexicans who did not want to assimilate to American society as anti-Americans. This ongoing lack of monetary support to the Brownson House incited the new Bishop Joseph Cantwell (1874-1947) to centralize all the Catholic charities that he oversaw, which meant removing the presidency of the Brownson House from Mary Julia Workman. According to historian Francis Weber, “Cantwell did not believe in placing an ethnic label on charitable work. Bishop Cantwell believed that the ‘Brown Scare’ and the anti-Mexican feeling might discourage contributions.”⁵⁵ However, Brownson House demonstrated how the Mexican refugees in Los Angeles wanted to be good citizens and respected the values of American society, while still embracing their own native heritage.

⁵⁵ Romo, *East Los Angeles*, 100. The “Brown Scare” increased with the propaganda and speeches of the Hermano Flores Magon and his followers. The newspapers oversaw spreading the speeches and replicating the Regeneration articles. American society, in Los Angeles and the United States, were reading about the Anarchist ideology that they propagated and the revolutionary plots in the Southwest.

Centralization of the Brownson House

Bishop Cantwell believed that all Catholic charity was the responsibility of the diocese. In 1919, he established the Associated Catholic Charities to centralize power in a single institution governing all aid associations.⁵⁶ This shift mirrored a centralization of powers that was typical in political and social organizations during the Progressive Era. Similar to other leaders at the time, Bishop Cantwell believed that all facilities must be brought under the jurisdiction of a central office.⁵⁷ In a letter complaining about the Bishop's plans to centralize the charities, Workman wrote:

Diocesan Bureau of Charities' is written the need for unification is stressed and rightly so, but the dangers are pointed out as follows, viz., pioneer organizations should not be compelled to lose their individuality, and the Bureau must bring the charities together and not remain a financial agency only. Too much supervision, too much efficiency, may kill the spirit of Christian charity and harness the administration of charity to the paraphernalia of the steel industry or of a department store.⁵⁸

Meanwhile, Bishop Cantwell wanted to coordinate the work of all Catholic charities and institutions, which included seven orphanages, two clinics, the Brownson House, and other charitable organizations in the diocese. The Associated Catholic Charities was designed to modernize and increase charitable efficiency within their facilities, encouraging benefactions and establishing a

⁵⁶ Jay P. Dolan, *In Search of an American Catholicism: A History of Religion and Culture in Tension*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 159.

⁵⁷ Francis J. Weber, *Century of Fulfillment: The Roman Catholic Church in Southern California, 1840-1947* (n.p., 1990) 424.

⁵⁸ Mary's Letter CIX, *Golden Friendship*, 263.

liaison with other public and private agencies.⁵⁹ The Association would spend money on the development of new programs and new facilities over the next two years, which included Americanization programs in the Brownson Settlement House.

Workman knew that the Brownson House was going to fall under the purview of the newly formed centralization of Catholic Charities, so she expressed her discontent by writing, “I believe in true scientific administration, but I value most the spirit of love, without which the most elaborate mechanism becomes a monster.”⁶⁰ Beyond a centralized government, Workman believed in social justice that exceeded efficient work which did not contribute to the social growth of the population. As she published in *The Tidings* magazine, “Under normal conditions Christian justice and charity would sacrifice for the healing of society. Under the abnormal conditions of desertion of Christian principles and a corrupt social system, it does not and cannot suffice to meet the claims upon it.”⁶¹ Some of the changes by Bishop John Cantwell (1874-1947) included the hiring of specialized personnel for the charities instead of utilizing the volunteers who had given years of service due to the love they had for their neighborhood. Furthermore, Bishop Cantwell suggested the Brownson House stop social work altogether and focus on religious work, stating “the dioceses will support immigrants with intense Americanization programs, and the function of the Brownson House should be purely religious such as religious instruction, and practices.”⁶²

After the centralization of charities, Mary Julia was relieved of her duties as President of Brownson House, which was then placed under the Association of Catholic Charities’ newly appointed director Rev. William E. Corr (1882–?). Father Corr

⁵⁹ Weber, *Century of Fulfillment*, 425. The Catholic Charities was named Associated Catholic Charities in 1919.

⁶⁰ Mary’s Letter CIX, *Golden Friendship*, 263.

⁶¹ Sociology, *The Tidings*, February 23, 1917, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.

⁶² Mary’s Letter CVII, *Golden Friendship*, 260.

had served as director of charities in the diocese of Fall River prior to his migration to California.⁶³

The new objective of the organizations within the diocese was to increase charitable donations, expand its facilities, and improve those that were already established. Father Corr wanted to establish another larger center by the neighborhood adjacent to the Brownson House district by the Hogar Feliz house.⁶⁴ The diocese was able to increase the donation, due to the Bishop's relationship with conservative Catholics, and invested the money in the dioceses' religious work and the Americanization program.

The relationship between the Dioceses of Los Angeles and Brownson House Association began to fracture, in a memorandum dated November 30, 1919, it was stated that "Brownson House Settlement Association will continue to function in all the affairs of Brownson House in the future as in the past, subject to general direction and supervision of the Bureau of Catholic Charities."⁶⁵ Catholic Charities began to give priority to the Americanization programs and took over the expenses used at the Brownson House. Father Corr mandated Workman to leave the financial administration of Brownson House to the Dioceses stating, "Rt. Rev. Bishop agrees to have the Los Angeles Division of the National Catholic War Council take over all expenses of the Brownson House during the year beginning December 1st."⁶⁶

⁶³ Michael E. Engh, S.J. "A Better Realization of Social Justice: Mary Julia Workman, Los Angeles Progressive," 15 Serie 1, Box 2, Folder 9, Workman Research Materials, CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.

⁶⁴ Our Diocesan Charities, *The Tidings*, Serie 1, Box 2, Folder 1, Workman Research Materials, CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.

⁶⁵ Memorandum, November 30, 1919. Serie 1: Mary Julia Workman, Folder 1, box 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.

⁶⁶ Rev. Corr to Mary Julia Workman, December 4, 1919. Serie 1: Mary Julia Workman, Folder 1, box 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.

Workman commented that “On January 31, our Treasure (Miss Bernard) was told that no more expenses of Brownson House will be paid by Father Corr’s office until a more satisfactory agreement has been reached by him.” In this way, Workman complained to the bishop about the negative actions taken against the Brownson House. She elaborated that “we understand that it was your wish as owner of the property we occupy at present, therefore, we are paying our own expenses. We have a brief sense of freedom once more.” After this point, Workman no longer respectfully took the decisions of her superiors, due to the humiliations and rudeness to which she was subjected to by Father Corr. It was in a letter to Bishop Cantwell where she wrote her feelings and desire to resign, “I shall give up everything, even my last desire that the name of Brownson House pass with us, if you will let me go. What we have done has been done holy for lord’s glory and I shall offer him the sacrifice of all our dear dead hopes.”⁶⁷

Describing what was happening in Los Angeles, Workman wrote to her friend Sister Mary Leopold in Oakland that “Brownson House is doomed.”⁶⁸ After Workman let her feelings be known, Bishop Cantwell offered her a paid secretary position which she rejected based on her beliefs that labor was voluntary and reflected the love she had for the people and children who were oppressed in this country. Workman wrote that “Father Corr believes that he has offered us much and that it has been refused. My refusal of the position as paid Secretary at the Bureau, for one thing, will forever stand against us; also, my rejection of a stereotyped building offered, on Pleasant Avenue. But even if we accepted all this, Brownson House would have lost its individuality, and so would have died in its finer values.”⁶⁹

The centralization plan served to acquire more funds, regardless of social service. In the Brownson Settlement House, the funds gathered aimed to support an Americanization program aligned with what the United States government was doing to

⁶⁷ Mary Julia Workman to Bishop Cantwell, February 8, 1920.

⁶⁸ Mary’s Letter CXII, *Golden Friendship*, 269

⁶⁹ Mary’s Letter CXII, *Golden Friendship*, 269

emphasize nationalism during World War I. The program, and others like it, sought to create a cultural and societal mentality to fight against radical Socialism that was spreading across the streets of industrial cities in the 1910s. Bishop Cantwell guaranteed Americanization work for immigrants, which Workman criticized in a report, “Until 1917, and the world war, moreover, the word Americanization was not in the popular vocabulary; the conditions of the immigrants was known to an interested few, only joined to all this difficulty of being unknown was the added obstacle of prejudice against the Mexican even among his American co-religionists.”⁷⁰ The Brownson House survived struggles against many odds. Volunteers taught themselves about foreigners, and their culture so they in turn could educate those who supported their work about the immigrants and refugees they served. They had to not only learn about but understand refugees and immigrants who partook in their services and gain their confidence. Brownson House was financially poor, but still provided an adequate settlement house and services to many underserved communities.

The spirit of the Brownson House, wrote Mary Julia Workman, “was a spirit of cooperation and service; a spirit of welcome of neighborhood, of generous willingness to work with its neighborhood and with every beneficial social force in the community.”⁷¹ The process in which the Americanization program was introduced, and the modified bureaucracy were her triggers for leaving Brownson House. Workman lamented that “the pioneer has a certain satisfaction when others find the trail which he has blazed, so we can rejoice today that the need of the immigrant is being recognized. Our hope for success shall attend the newly elected Directors of Brownson House Settlement Association and the whole plan for the diocese.”⁷²

It was in that summer of 1920, when the Brownson House ceased to be what it had once been, a voluntary based settlement

⁷⁰ Mary Julia Workman, Handwritten President Report, On June 6, 1920.

⁷¹ Mary Julia Workman, Handwritten President Report, On June 6, 1920.

⁷² Mary Julia Workman, Handwritten President Report, On June 6, 1920.

house to part of the larger Catholic Charities association as Workman recalled, “There has been an unbroken inner harmony at Brownson House, due to the unselfish devotion of each worker which has been the strength of the organization.”⁷³ After the centralization, the volunteers decided to move away from the house, leaving behind an institution that failed to reach the immigrants and poverty-stricken refugees in the city. After the Brownson Settlement House, Bishop Cantwell asked Workman to become a diocesan representative for the National Council of Catholic Women and be part of the conference of the Catholic Workers of the diocese to which she did not respond. By 1921, the Catholic Charities association was restructured as the Bureau of Catholic Charities, and Father Corr was removed from his charge as Director of the Charities and a new Director was appointed, Father Robert Lucey (1801-1977), who later became Bishop of San Antonio, Texas in 1934. Reverend Lucey asked Workman to return to Brownson House however she refused the position, and The Sister of the Holy Family who oversaw the new Brownson House took over the settlement house and their services.

Mary Julia Workman: Beyond the Brownson House

After the Brownson House, Workman was involved in a long list of both Catholic and civic charitable organizations. In 1922, she was a part of the Native American Concerns. By 1925, she became a Civil Service Commission member. In 1926, she organized and presided over the Diocesan Council of Catholic Women, and she became a member of the Municipal League and League of Women Voters. On November 19, 1926, Workman received the “Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice,” from Pope Pius XI (1857-1939). The Supreme Pontiff conferred the honor of bestowing that decoration on Mary Julia Workman and Queen María Cristina of Spain. The recognition came directly from the Vatican and extolled the charitable missionary work of Workman on behalf of the Church.

⁷³ Mary Julia Workman, Handwritten President Report, On June 6, 1920.

Pope Pius XI publicly acknowledged her charitable and social work done in Los Angeles.⁷⁴ Her acquaintances, who lived and saw her hard work at Brownson House sent letters congratulating her. One of the letters written by Attorney Joseph Scott (n.d) noted, “Your life has been spent in self-sacrifice and service to duty to such a degree that it would do credit to a person who has consecrated her life by religious vows”⁷⁵ Reverend Siedenburg (n.d) from Chicago wrote, “I know no woman in America who deserves this honor more than you do and it was great satisfaction to know that your work has been appreciated by the whole Catholic Church.”⁷⁶ Furthermore, in 1935, she was the second Vice President of the Municipal Light and Power Defense League.

From a progressive platform, Workman did not put her faith aside, she used it as a tool for understanding as it was Progressive Catholicism that led her to give her life to the advocacy for disadvantaged communities and aided in her search for social justice. Mary Julia Workman was a tireless woman that worked in defense of marginalized and persecuted people within her community and city. She was a member of the Democratic Party and fought actively in political campaigns in the 1930s and 1940s. When World War II (1939-1945) began, she became the chapter officer of the League of Nations Association. By 1939, she became part of the American Committee for Peace through Democracy. In 1943, she became actively working to defend the Japanese Americans against concentration camps. In 1944, she

⁷⁴ Pope Honors Holy Names Graduate for Welfare Work, *The Tidings*, November 23, 1926, Series 1: Mary Julia Workman Box 1, Folder 3, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.

⁷⁵ Joseph Scott to Mary Julia Workman, Nov 18, 1926, Series 1: Mary Julia Workman Box 1, Folder 3, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.

⁷⁶ Reverend Frederick Siedenburg to Mary Julia Workman, December 20, 1919, Series 1: Mary Julia Workman Box 1, Folder 3, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.

Seeking Social Justice

became a member of the Catholic Inter-Racial Council and fought for the defense of African Americans. She was a member of the National Conference of Christians and Jews and in 1946, she worked with Father George Dunne (n.d) who was a prominent activist and writer, to help fight against racial segregation and discrimination in America.⁷⁷ Workman also became involved in the Hollywood Strike in 1946 with Reverend Dunne, advocating for fair labor laws in the film industry. Mary J. Workman's unwavering dedication, relationships, and work with not only the immigrant communities during the Progressive Era but with marginalized communities within the city must be recognized for its historical value within the Catholic Church, the City of Los Angeles, and women's studies.



Figure 9. Mary Julia Workman Circa 1918 Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University

⁷⁷ Eric Pace, "George Dunne, 92, Priest and Ecumenist, Dies," *The New York Times*, July 14, 1998, accessed March 2, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/1998/07/14/us/george-dunne-92-priest-and-ecumenist-dies.html>



Figure 10. Pro Ecclesia Et Pontifice, Vatican Certificate Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University



Figure 11. Los Angeles Times Article. Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University



Figure 12: Brownson House Volunteers with Children. Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.

On January 12, 1964, Workman at the age of ninety-one died in Los Angeles, California. Workman challenged social and clerical barriers in favor of those in need, through her work, she was able to bring brief social justice to Mexican immigrants in Los Angeles. The Brownson House sought true progress for foreign-born individuals by providing education, public health, jobs, and social services. Unlike other settlement houses, Brownson Settlement House treated immigrants respectfully, learning about their culture and language to help them. Americanization was with mutual respect and was not a conditioned assimilation. Immigrants were welcome regardless of their religion and race. While in some settlement houses, religious conversion and the loss of each individual's cultural identity was the norm.

Workman went against repressive and racist manifestations of the time. She is an example of American Catholics who sought the common good among the impoverished. She was able to work with both Catholics and outside religions who shared similar progressive ideas. For nineteen years, the Brownson Settlement House was staffed by young women such as Mary Julia Workman,

who responded to poverty in the city. Workman walked through the city's slums where she saw people in need, she spoke, lived, and prayed with them, understanding their language and culture.

Workman worked to break the barriers of systematic invisibility that people with disabilities had, who were marginalized from society and discriminated against because of their physical condition. Contrary to the eugenics ideology, Mary J. Workman advocated for respecting the individual's life and giving value to people. She considered that the social context was a factor that determined how a person with weaknesses could be rehabilitated and help social progress. The Brownson House clinics served to provide health and rehabilitation support to disabled people. Going against the eugenics movement that started during the Progressive Era, she had respect for life and for those with disabilities. She defied the eugenic ideologists who supported that only physically perfect immigrants were able to fit into American society.

She challenged the nativist and nationalist rhetoric of Americanization used to harass immigrants and indigenous people to force them to leave behind their culture, traditions, and language and assimilate into Anglo-American culture. At Brownson House, English was important to survive on the city streets, but the native languages of immigrants were important to learn and aided in bilingual education. The culture and traditions of immigrants were recognized and respected. Therefore, it was important that the Catholic Church recognize Mexican traditions and the religious syncretism from which people exercised in their country and contributed to their devotion to the Church.

The official history of the Los Angeles Dioceses has ignored and underestimated Workman's legacy in the Catholic Church of California. In all books published by the Dioceses, archivist and historian, Monsignor Francis Weber, Mary J. Workman has been ignored and any recognition for what she had done has also been ignored. In some cases, when Weber mentioned Brownson House in books, he downplayed how successful it was during the almost two decades of its existence in Los Angeles. In

the book written by Weber, *Catholic Heroes of Southern California* (2007), he writes about several prominent Catholics but blatantly ignores Workman. In the Diocese archives there are no letters from Cantwell to Workman, no Brownson House records or mentions of Mary Julia, therefore, it is difficult to find archives, documents, or official records related to her, or her work within the Diocese Archives; however, Workman had the forethought to keep documents that were later transferred to relatives.

In 1929, Sister Leopold published a book of letters written by Mary Julia's friends at Holy Names Convent in Oakland, California. This compilation of personal letters from Workman reflects her intimate feelings about the situation she experienced during her conflict with the clergy of the Diocese. When the book was published, Father Corr's name was censored due to his position as a practicing priest at St. Elizabeth Catholic Church in Altadena, California, as a result, he was named as "Father X." The book was banned within the Diocese of Los Angeles in 1926 due to the negative criticism of the Catholic Church and Father X. The few surviving copies of the book are a primary source on the life of Workman, and from these letters, we can gain an intimate insight into her life during this period.

Workman's life and accomplishments have been kept in boxes down in archives as the Catholic Church has not recognized her work in society. The Church has forgotten Workman's vision for social justice, and the liberation of the oppressed through education, work, and health. She observed the needs of the poor and the marginalized, understood their ways of life, and learned from them. She did not agree with the centralization of charitable institutions because she knew that it was a bureaucracy that sought only to increase financial resources rather than benefit society. She was decisive in breaking the barrier of respect for the clergy by resigning and rejecting the proposal to become Father Corr's secretary and being unable to lead and make her own decisions at Brownson Settlement House. The gender dynamics that were prevalent throughout society and the church imposed a conflict between the priest who had belittled the volunteers who, for almost

twenty years, had administered and served the most destitute in Los Angeles. At this point of her life, Workman put aside the values of submission and obedience taught in her adolescence to raise her voice and consolidate her leadership with the other volunteers.

Although the dogma of the Church is inviolable, the Church must give women an equal place within the institution and recognize their leadership both in the Church and in society. Women have managed to sustain the foundations of the Church, which is charity and love for the most unprotected and poverty-stricken, such as Teresa de Avila (1515-1582) in Europe, Elizabeth Seaton (1774-1821) in the United States, and Mary Julia Workman in California.

The Catholic Church in Los Angeles is the largest diocese in the United States and the most ethnically diverse and has understood that its social work in the poor sectors of the city encompasses all communities and with 'Together in Mission' it has embraced ethnic and cultural diversity creating a multicultural church trying to reach the impoverished. In 2020, Pope Francis called for social justice for the unprotected and helpless, and the need to understand their suffering, which is something Workman called for and *did* in the city of Los Angeles' over a hundred years ago through the Brownson Settlement House and her many other social justice efforts.

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An Analysis of American Civil War Strategy and Tactics, and the Significance of Technological Innovations

By Ryan Rethaford

Abstract: The American Civil War (1861-1865) is one of the United States' most defining moments. It remains the deadliest war ever fought by the United States and involved many new military technologies. This paper seeks to disprove the narrative that the Union and Confederate militaries failed to utilize these new technologies to their advantage. Many primary sources from officers and enlisted men prove they were aware of the significance of these technologies and used them effectively. Furthermore, this paper will draw upon a number of secondary sources to support this argument. Repeating weapons, breech-loaded weapons, and rifling were all used efficiently and rationally, and the more archaic tactics which persisted throughout the war, such as massed-infantry formations, were born of necessity, rather than ignorance of these new technologies.

Introduction

Historically, wars fought on the precipice of the introduction of new, deadly military innovations have been some of the most infamous and costly. The 19th and 20th centuries saw unprecedented technological advancement and some of the most gruesome conflicts. The American Civil War (1861-1865) is among these struggles, and the role new technologies played is undeniable. However, there exists a prevalent misconception regarding the nature of this conflict's battles. Films, video games, and even novels often portray Civil War combat in a manner that

leaves the consumer left with disbelief at what they view as suicidal charges, regiments of infantrymen illogically standing in a line firing their rifles at one another, or men walking straight into the line of fire of the enemy's artillery. While such things occurred, it was not always the case. These portrayals lead many to view both the officer and common soldier as having been incompetent: men stuck in the past, unable to recognize that new technologies, such as rifling, demanded new strategies and tactics. Even some within the historical community hold these views. This is arguably an inaccurate portrayal of the Civil War as a whole. In fact, the Civil War saw a plethora of military strategies and tactics which would not have been possible without the influx of new military technologies, although many well-established tactics remained for good reason. This paper will draw upon a number of both primary and secondary sources and seeks to disprove common misconceptions regarding the logic of the strategies and tactics used during the Civil War. By examining infantry tactics, cavalry tactics, artillery tactics, and overarching strategies, we can see that officers and common soldiers alike were well aware of the significance of these new technologies, and utilized them efficiently in the most logical ways possible.

Historical Background

Before delving into this paper's analysis, it is important to define strategy and tactics, to define the scope of this paper, and to acknowledge the interpretations which have been published in relation to this subject. For the purpose of this paper, *strategy* refers to the overarching goals of Civil War military leaders. An example of this would be seeking control of an important location, such as the town Harper's Ferry, which changed hands a total of eight times between the Confederacy and Union throughout the war and served as an important river crossing and railroad depot.¹

¹ The apostrophe was removed from the town's name decades after the Civil War, but this paper will use the historical spelling.

In contrast, *tactics* refers to the techniques implemented on a smaller scale, typically in battle, and utilized at multiple levels, from the smaller-sized brigades and regiments to the larger divisions and corps of which armies were composed. *Strategy* and *tactics* go hand in hand with one another in the formation of war plans, and both are arguably of equal importance.

In regards to current literature on this subject, there is no clear consensus among historians on whether Civil War officers maneuvered their armies in reasonable ways given the new technologies available to them. Some historians contend the strategies and tactics were indeed suicidal and poorly planned. Others claim arguments similar to the one this paper will make, chiefly that the war was conducted in a rational way given the technology available. This paper will first summarize some of the former arguments, then the latter. However, it is important to note that much of the literature which pertains to strategy and tactics is often focused on very specific elements of warfare, and does not make a clear argument regarding how logical they were. This paper will take many of these more narrow analyses, and combine them into a meta-analysis in order to gain a deeper understanding of the strategies and tactics which were used.

Among those claiming that the Civil War had little to no revolutionary new strategies and tactics, and that the war was poorly conducted, is British historian A.D. Harvey. In his article titled, "Was the American Civil War the First Modern War?" Harvey analyzes the degree to which the Civil War contributed to military planning worldwide. He concludes that even had the American Civil War not occurred, the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 would have included many of the same elements by nature of the technology itself.² While there may be a degree of truth to this analysis, it overlooks the fact that regardless of hypothetical alternate histories, the Civil War was in fact the first large-scale conflict to feature the prolific use of many of the technologies it

² A. D. Harvey, "Was the American Civil War the First Modern War?" *History* 97, no. 2 (2012): 280.

did. Among these innovations were rifled small arms and rifled cannons, repeating carbines, sharpshooting rifles, defensive trenches, and the telegraph. Harvey also points to the Second Italian War of Independence in 1859, during which France moved soldiers by train, as being the first instance of a military using railways to transport troops.³ While this may again be true, it arguably looks at the Civil War from too narrow of a lens, as trains were used as much for logistical purposes as troop movement, and there is no denying how widespread their use was during the Civil War (especially in the North). Furthermore, Harvey fails to account for the stark contrast between America's deadliest war, and a European war that cost far fewer lives than the Civil War. The scale of the Civil War is reason enough to draw a distinction between these two conflicts and their significance. Harvey touches on other elements of the war, including flanking maneuvers, the use of ironclads, and cavalry tactics, and gives an analysis of each. As with the previous areas, Harvey contends that practically every element of Civil War strategy and tactics was either not unique, or was only allowed to be effective due to poorly trained armies and inefficient cavalry. This ignores additional key elements to the Civil War, which include irregular and guerrilla tactics, such as were seen in Kansas and Missouri in the early stages of the war. Overall, Harvey makes some interesting points, but one can argue they are missing full context.

Ulysses S. Grant III (1881-1968), the grandson of Former President Ulysses S. Grant (1822-1885), gives his own commentary on the subject in the article "Military Strategy of the Civil War." In contrast to Harvey's interpretations, Grant gives a more balanced perspective. He refers to the Civil War as "the first modern war," and offers a combination of praise and criticism for the way each side of the conflict conducted their military campaigns. On the subject of the introduction of new military technologies early on and throughout the war, Grant says, "They were working with new arms in new media, and looked at from

³ Harvey, "Was the American Civil War the First Modern War?" 273.

this point of view it is remarkable that the leaders on both sides did so well.”⁴ In the following pages, Grant comments on the overarching strategies of both sides, offering a touch of criticism. Quoting General John Schofield (1831-1906), Grant acknowledges the belief that both sides made the mistake of concentrating on what Schofield referred to as “territorial strategy,” or the focus of capturing and occupying enemy territory as a primary objective.⁵ Offering an alternative strategy to this, Schofield argued that the primary objective of a military force must be to destroy the enemy army. It appears Grant agrees with this notion, although he does not say it outright. Overall, Grant seems to give a fair analysis of the war, offering praise for successes and potential alternatives where both sides made the wrong strategic and tactical decisions.

The Decades Prior to the Civil War

Having given some examples of the literature, the next step is to provide historical background on the nature of warfare leading up to the Civil War itself. The era from the Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815) to the Mexican-American War (1846-1848) saw little change in strategy or tactics. Smoothbore weapons continued to be the staple, not just for infantry, but cavalry and artillery crews as well. In this sense, the American Civil War was indeed the first time American officers and enlisted men alike had to endure the increased accuracy of rifled weapons. Despite this, many tactics stayed the same throughout the war as they were fifty years prior, yet as this paper will show, this was born of necessity rather than the ignorance of officers stuck fighting in the past. In his book, *Civil War Infantry Tactics: Training, Combat, and Small-Unit Effectiveness*, Earl J. Hess provides an in-depth analysis of linear infantry tactics, which he notes originated in 17th and 18th century

⁴ U. S. Grant, “Military Strategy of the Civil War.” *Military Affairs* 22, no. 1 (1958): 20.

⁵ Grant, “Military Strategy of the Civil War,” 21.

Europe.⁶ Hess seeks to explain why, despite the introduction of rifled weapons, Civil War infantry tactics changed little from past decades. When discussing officers' implementation of Napoleonic infantry tactics, Hess notes, "Those worthy of their salt could articulate their units with surprising ease during combat, going from column to battle line and back again as circumstances demanded. This was a brand of warfare very different from that of half a century earlier and remarkably similar to the Civil War half a century later."⁷ This flexibility which Hess describes was an important element to Civil War armies. Much the same as Napoleon's forces before them, Union and Confederate forces followed a specific, battle-tested command structure, ensuring the available manpower was utilized as effectively as possible. This is, as Hess himself importantly notes, a large contrast from musket-armed infantry from the 1500s and 1600s, whose formations were much more akin to those of Renaissance-era pikemen or musketeers.⁸ The question still remains, however, of why exactly Civil War tactics changed little from the Napoleonic era. That is a question this paper will soon seek to answer.

A New Era of Military Technology

The implementation of rifling was not the only major innovation that would shape the Civil War. In addition to the standard muzzle-loaded rifles most infantrymen would be armed with, repeating carbines, breech-loaded rifles, and sharpshooting rifles also played a significant role throughout the war, especially in the later years. Muzzle-loaded rifles were not much different in function from their smoothbore musket predecessors, except for their potentially superior accuracy and unanimous use of percussion caps instead of flint hammers to ignite the gunpowder (although, some older flintlock muskets are known to have been rifled and converted to

⁶ Earl J. Hess, *Civil War Infantry Tactics: Training, Combat and Small-Unit Effectiveness*. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 2015), xi.

⁷ Hess, *Civil War Infantry Tactics*, 14.

⁸ Hess, *Civil War Infantry Tactics*, 1.

percussion cap-style during the war, likely due to arms shortages). It is also important to note, as Hess mentions, that the *effective* accuracy and range of the new rifles was largely exaggerated. As Hess discusses the international response to rifle technology, he states, “European writers predicted many results, including increased firepower on the skirmish line and a reduction in the ability of artillery and cavalry to battle infantry. More radical observers even predicted the demise of linear tactics and their replacement with open order, skirmish formations.”⁹ This does show that military theorists and observers were very forward-thinking, and many of their predictions would come to fruition by the time of World War I (1914-1918). However, as Hess importantly notes, many of these predictions did not come true immediately following the introduction of these early rifles, in large part due to the skill needed to properly adjust the rifle’s sights. Regarding this, Hess states:

In contrast to the flat trajectory of the smoothbore, this projectile [the rifled Minie ball] curved over the heads of many men who stood in front of it. Sighted for a distance of 300 yards, anyone standing between 100 and 225 yards from the muzzle would be safe. Ironically, the initial 100-yard killing zone was about the same effective range as the smoothbore, and the other killing zone was only 75 yards deep.¹⁰

What Hess describes here are the killing zones in which the bullet would either overshoot or undershoot the target. No matter which range a rifleman sighted his firearm, there would be specific range(s) in which his rifle would be prone to missing. This is understandable considering these were the first attempts at creating modern, effective sights. Furthermore, it would have been unlikely

⁹ Hess, *Civil War Infantry Tactics*, 30.

¹⁰ Hess, *Civil War Infantry Tactics*, 31.

that an infantryman would have the time to continually adjust his sights as the enemy drew closer. This tendency to overshoot the enemy is the likely reason why many Civil War officers would famously order their men to “aim low.” The key takeaway here is that while these new rifles had the *potential* to be far more accurate, long-ranged, and deadly than their smoothbore predecessors, in practice, the average soldier would never achieve this level of marksmanship. Thus, while some of these new technologies would serve as effective counters to cavalry assaults, as military theorists at the time had predicted, the Minie ball-style muzzle-loaded rifle was not enough to warrant a total overhaul of tactics.

The latter three firearms listed previously: repeating carbines, breech-loaded rifles, and sharpshooting rifles, were far more of a jump in tactical advantage than the standard muzzle-loaded rifle. Repeating carbines were typically of a lower caliber than standard rifles, but their superior rate of fire made up for this. In his book, *Weapons of the Civil War Cavalryman*, John Walter provides a thorough analysis of the model 1860 Spencer carbine, which was often used by cavalry. When describing its use by Union volunteers who privately acquired these repeaters, Walter states, “During the Battle of Hoover’s Gap, fought on June 24, 1863, men of Colonel John Thomas Wilder’s ‘Lightning Brigade’ were able to maul a far larger band of Confederates thanks to their privately acquired Spencer rifles.”¹¹ This statement from Walter is preceded by a diagram showing the inner functions of the Spencer carbine, demonstrating its complex inner workings, including a spring to push bullets from the interior magazine forward, and a second spring to elevate the bullet into the firing chamber.¹² These carbines were operated with a lever, in a very similar fashion to the repeating firearms which would rise to prominence in the decades following the Civil War. In this sense, the Spencer carbine was a military technology that revolutionized firearms.

¹¹ John Walter, *Weapons of the Civil War Cavalryman* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2020), 12.

¹² Walter. *Weapons of the Civil War Cavalryman*, 10.

Sharpshooting rifles could be either muzzle-loaded or breech-loaded, with the latter having a superior rate of fire. In his book, *Union Sharpshooter versus Confederate Sharpshooter: American Civil War, 1861-65*, Gary Yee gives a breakdown of these innovative rifles. In analyzing what is perhaps the most famous sharpshooting rifle of the Civil War, the Sharps rifle (the origin of the term sharpshooter comes from this rifle), Yee says the following:

The .52-caliber Sharps was a breechloading, single-shot rifle. Lowering the lever caused the locking block to drop and expose the chamber for inserting a linen or skin cartridge. After inserting the cartridge, the breech was raised, slicing off the end of the cartridge and exposing the powder to ignition by either a percussion cap or a pellet primer. Quick to load, the Sharps was ideal for skirmishing as reloading the rifle did not require the soldier to expose himself as much as when reloading a rifle musket.¹³

The ability of a sharpshooter, whether he was skirmishing the enemy or shooting at them from 500 yards away, to stay hidden and in cover while reloading was a tremendous advantage over soldiers unfortunate enough to be equipped with the standard muzzle-loaded rifle.

Available Industry and Manpower, and the Terrain of the Battlefields

Another important element to bear in mind when studying this subject is the regional differences between the Union and Confederacy. The Union had both superior manpower and superior

¹³ Gary Yee and Johnny Shumate, *Union Sharpshooter versus Confederate Sharpshooter: American Civil War, 1861-65*. (Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing, 2019), 19.

industry, which enabled it to endure losses much easier than the Confederacy. This enabled the Union to take bolder actions with fewer repercussions, which could help explain certain strategic and tactical differences throughout the war. Additionally, the terrain and weather conditions at the time of specific engagements may be important factors in understanding the decisions which were made by either side's officers. Weather conditions, mountains, and uneven terrains must be taken into account when analyzing tactics. By looking at the Battle of Agincourt in 1415 CE, it is clear how much of a decisive role muddy and uneven terrain can have on the effectiveness of offensive maneuvers. This was no less true during the Civil War. Cliffs, rivers, and woods also offered tactical advantages for defenders, while placing greater strain on the attacking force. The town of Harper's Ferry, in West Virginia, and the mountainous Maryland Heights overlooking it from across the Potomac River, serve as an excellent example of how important control of the terrain was to either side during the war. Some of the most pivotal Confederate incursions into Union territory began with the capture or re-capture of Harper's Ferry, enabling their forces to invade Maryland and Pennsylvania. A Union officer, Lieutenant Russel M. Tuttle, of the New York Volunteer Infantry, describes his division's deployment to recapture the area and defend Harper's Ferry in his journal (edited by George H. Tappan). Tuttle states, "After the battle near Sharpsburg, Williams Division was ordered to Harpers Ferry to drive away the Rebels and hold this place. As we supposed that they held the Maryland Hills which overlooked it, we had to climb the mountains from Brownsville, and advance along the ridge."¹⁴ Maryland Heights, which Lieutenant Tuttle was clearly referring to, was of tremendous tactical significance. Overlooking Harper's Ferry, protected by the Potomac River, and teeming with ridges perfect for the deployment of artillery, it was a much sought-after position. Union forces took advantage of these natural defenses, although the garrison never

¹⁴ Russel M. Tuttle and George H. Tappan, *The Civil War Journal of Lt. Russell M. Tuttle, New York Volunteer Infantry* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2006), 36.

numbered enough soldiers to prevent future Confederate advances. The placards in Harper's Ferry list the Union garrison around 10,000 men, which was nowhere near enough manpower to stop the advance of the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia when it invaded in late 1862.

Analysis of Infantry, Cavalry, and Artillery Tactics

The vast majority of manpower in the war consisted of infantrymen. The standard infantryman in the Napoleonic era served a similar function to Civil War soldiers, but the technology available to them differed. By the time of the Civil War, most infantrymen could expect to be equipped with rifles instead of muskets. As mentioned previously, this did not fully revolutionize combat, as the effective range was oftentimes negated due to the sighting difficulties. In his article, "Civil War Infantry Assault Tactics," John K. Mahon (1912-2003) discusses how infantry formations were utilized in an offensive manner. In relation to the impact rifles had on the battlefield, Mahon says:

It enforced the following vital changes: (1) Stretched battle lines, (2) obliged armies to form for combat much further apart, (3) reduced the density of men in the battle zone, and (4) made battles into firefights with shock action decidedly subordinate. Still more important it caused battles to be at once much longer in time and less decisive in outcome. There were to be no more Waterloos. Finally, it made defense a good deal stronger than offense.¹⁵

These examples show that Civil War officers and soldiers did indeed respond to the introduction of new technologies, proving they were aware of the changes which were necessary. However,

¹⁵ John K. Mahon, "Civil War Infantry Assault Tactics," *Military Affairs* 25, no. 2 (1961): 59.

many elements of infantry tactics remained unchanged. As Mahon goes on to note, “Generally speaking the physical damage done by bayonet attacks was inflicted by bullets, and the issue decided before the two fighting lines closed with each other. In short, it was the threat of being run through, coupled with firepower, not the act itself that made attacks with the bayonet effective.¹⁶ Granted, Mahon also argues that Civil War formations were modeled on the assumption the bayonet would decide the outcome of battle.¹⁷ Thus, Mahon appears of the opinion that infantry charges were not logical, even going as far as to say that, “Bullets worked their greatest execution against bodies of men advancing to the assault. The fact is that the firepower of the rifle musket was relatively modern whereas the formations used in attack were obsolete.”¹⁸ This paper disagrees with this element of Mahon’s analysis, which otherwise is an excellent one. A primary source that demonstrates the effectiveness of infantry charges is the journal of the Confederate private William Randolph Howell (edited by Jerry D. Thompson), who took part in the Confederacy’s failed New Mexico Campaign. Among his journal entries, Howell notes, “The battle for some time appeared to be hanging on a thread, as it were, but about 4^{1/2} P.M., as the brave Col. Green ordered a charge, our boys killed and wounded a great many of the enemy and routed them completely. In that famous charge with the enemy pouring grape into our ranks, we only had five killed, besides Major Lockridge, who fell at the cannon wheel.”¹⁹ While this account from Howell only references a charge, with no mention of bayonets, it is a clear demonstration of the potential effectiveness of charges. Furthermore, the menial casualties the Confederates seem to have sustained demonstrate that charges did not always result in heavier casualties for the attacking force, oftentimes

¹⁶ Mahon, “Civil War Infantry Assault Tactics,” 59.

¹⁷ Mahon, “Civil War Infantry Assault Tactics,” 60.

¹⁸ Mahon, “Civil War Infantry Assault Tactics,” 60.

¹⁹ William Randolph Howell and Jerry D. Thompson, *Westward the Texans: The Civil War Journal of Private William Randolph Howell* (Texas, Texas Western Press, University of Texas at El Paso, 1990), 88.

having tremendous success. However, one potential hindrance to an attacking force was breastworks, or fortifications.

The importance of fortifications in defensive matters cannot be understated. Primary accounts support this analysis, with the diary of William C. Benson, a Union soldier, reading as follows, “Wednesday, 22. 23rd Corps moves up. Rebels attempt to cut their way through Hookers. We are sent double quick to support him. Work all night fortifying. Thursday, 23. We strengthen our works [fortifications] as the rebels are thought to be massing their forces to cut their way out at this point.”²⁰ While one could make the case that the common soldier was just following orders in their establishment of breastworks, it is clear that as a whole, Civil War armies recognized the value of strong defensive fortifications. Both sides of the war, if circumstances permitted, built fortifications to provide cover for their infantry.

Another important element to understanding infantry charges and defenses against them was the necessity of amassing firepower. The benefits breastworks provided to defending forces created a demand for the attacking force to mass superior firepower at the point of attack. This is why infamous battle charges, such as those at Fredericksburg and Gettysburg, despite their failure to secure the positions they intended to, were ever attempted. However, there were additional reasons for keeping infantry close together. Massed infantry formations were largely necessary for any decisive victory to be achieved. The Battle of Gettysburg (1863) serves as a good example of why such tactics were often necessary. In his article, “A Tale of Two Armies: The Confederate Army of Northern Virginia and the Union Army of the Potomac and Their Cultures,” Joseph T. Glatthaar notes that the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia numbered somewhere around 75,000 men at the time of the battle.²¹ These estimates are

²⁰ Columbus C. Benson and William C. Benson. “Civil War Diary of William C. Benson,” *Indiana Magazine of History* 23, no. 3 (1927): 344.

²¹ Joseph T. Glatthaar, “A Tale of Two Armies: The Confederate Army of Northern Virginia and the Union Army of the Potomac and Their Cultures,” *Journal of the Civil War Era* 6, no. 3 (2016): 317.

supported by another author, James M. McPherson, who, in his book, *The Illustrated Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*, also concludes that the Confederates at Gettysburg numbered around 75,000.²² On the Union side at Gettysburg, Allen C. Guelzo provides an estimate of their available manpower in his book, *Gettysburg: The Last Invasion*. Guelzo notes that while the Union may have had additional manpower in the region, the number of Union soldiers present at Gettysburg was roughly 112,000.²³ Combined, this totals around 187,000 soldiers present at Gettysburg. The reason these numbers are significant is directly related to the nature of this era's warfare. Civil War enlisted men and officers alike were well aware of the dangers a bullet posed to them. This is why, when possible, defending forces would build fortifications for cover. Similarly, skirmishers would often use boulders, trees, farmhouses, barns, or sheds for cover. If we now imagine 187,000 soldiers building breastworks, digging trenches, and attempting to use skirmishing tactics for the sake of being able to freely seek cover, we would be looking at a battlefield dozens of miles wide, in which no decisive victory could ever be achieved by either army. The breaking down of armies into smaller units, and the stalemates which followed, are infamous components of World War I. Furthermore, there are a multitude of examples in 18th and 19th-century histories in which skirmishing forces, despite hours of harassing the enemy army, inflicted minimal casualties. The simple fact is that a skirmishing force could delay a conventional army, but had little hope of defeating them. Thus, the only way for one side of a battle to defeat the enemy was to mass their firepower and concentrate their attack on weak points in the enemy formation. In turn, this forced the defending side to fortify the positions of their infantry which faced such attacks. In other words, both sides would end up massing their firepower in key locations. Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg is perhaps the most famous

²² J. M. McPherson, *The Illustrated Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*, (Oxford University Press, 2003): 648.

²³ Allen C. Guelzo, *Gettysburg: The Last Invasion* (New York: Vintage Books, 2014), 159.

example of this. The Confederate attempt to break through Union lines and split their army in half was thwarted by the Union successfully reinforcing the point of attack. Both sides massed their infantry at the same locations. There was simply no other way the battle could have been decisively concluded beyond one side charging the other.

Another key factor that demanded infantry be condensed was the need for coordination. Radios did not exist in this era, with the closest technology being the telegraph. However useful telegraphs may have been, they were of virtually no help in the field of battle. As armies deployed and officers executed orders received from their superiors, new orders could only be given by letter or by word of mouth. For common soldiers, who made up the overwhelming majority of troops, orders were given verbally by their commanding officers and perhaps repeated by their regiment's sergeants. Because of this, it was necessary for soldiers to be in close proximity to one another. If formations were too spread out, proper coordination and execution of orders would have been impossible. These are among the primary reasons why, despite the introduction of rifles, infantry was still kept in tight formations.

Many primary sources from the journals of Civil War infantrymen have been preserved, and offer firsthand accounts of what the Civil War was like for the typical foot soldier. One such journal is that of Rufus J. Woolwine (with edits by Louis H. Manarin). Woolwine served in the Confederate Fifty-First Regiment Virginia Infantry, and saw action in the battles of Cold Harbor and Lynchburg, among others.²⁴ Both leading up to and during the Battle of Cold Harbor, Woolwine saw action multiple times, noting that on May 31st (the first day of the battle of Cold Harbor) his unit, "Had to fall back under a galling fire. Joseph W. Rose killed. Heavy firing from their artillery. During the day the

²⁴ Rufus J. Woolwine and Louis H. Manarin, "The Civil War Diary of Rufus J. Woolwine." *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 71, no. 4 (1963): 416.

sharpshooters kept very busy.”²⁵ Woolwine goes on to note, “At Gain[e]s’ Farm drove their sharpshooters from their pits and fortified.”²⁶ These excerpts demonstrate the fact that the threat posed by sharpshooters was well understood, and officers were well aware of both the need to dislodge sharpshooters and the tactical advantage fortifications offered the defending force.

A primary account of a Union sharpshooter who also fought at Cold Harbor can be found in Martin Pegler’s book, *Sharpshooting Rifles of the American Civil War: Colt, Sharps, Spencer, and Whitworth*. Pegler quotes directly from the writings of Private William King, who discussed his experiences at the battle. King wrote of his skirmishing element taking position in front of a swamp and laying down suppressive fire on the advancing Confederates. Pegler paraphrases King, stating, “At one point, King’s Sharps became so hot he was forced to stop shooting to let it cool. By choosing their position well, in front of impassable swampy ground and holding their fire until the last possible minute, the Berdan sharpshooters broke the Confederate charge with the loss to themselves of only one man killed and three wounded.”²⁷ One must wonder if the Confederate forces King fired upon were the very same soldiers Rufus J. Woolwine was among. There are a number of important points from this account that must be acknowledged. King’s gun becoming so hot that he was forced to stop shooting demonstrates the relatively fast rate of fire a Civil War sharpshooter was capable of. Furthermore, the use of the swamp to the sharpshooters’ tactical advantage demonstrates the important role terrain could have in any given battle. It may seem that the Confederate side in this particular engagement launched a foolhardy, suicidal attack, with one side being outgunned by the other, but this may have been impossible for them to realize prior to their attempted advance. Sharpshooters on both sides of the war had decisive roles in a number of battles.

²⁵ Woolwine and Manarin, “The Civil War Diary,” 437.

²⁶ Woolwine and Manarin, “The Civil War Diary,” 437.

²⁷ Martin Pegler, *Sharpshooting Rifles of the American Civil War: Colt, Sharps, Spencer, and Whitworth* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2017), 42.

A primary account of the Battle of Fredericksburg (1862) comes from Union soldier Charles B. Haydon, whose diary (with edits by Stephen W. Sears), gives insight into the effect Confederate sharpshooters had in halting the Union assault. As Haydon states, “One hundred & eighty pieces of artillery were unable after several hours to drive a few sharpshooters from the town so that the engineers could lay the bridge.”²⁸ This demonstrates both the potential shortcomings of artillery, while at the same time showing how much of a tactical role sharpshooters could have, in this case slowing the entirety of the Union’s advance into Fredericksburg for multiple hours. Furthermore, we can again see the use of natural terrain to the defending force’s advantage, with the Confederates forming defenses on the far side of the Rappahannock River. The necessity for the Union engineers to build a bridge while under fire from Confederate sharpshooters must have been a terrifying ordeal.

Walter also gives an example of how breech-loaded weapons (typically used by sharpshooters), also provided infantry with an effective counter to cavalry. Walter emphasizes this fact, stating, “...particularly later in the war, infantrymen armed with breech-loaders chambering self-contained ammunition could fire many more shots than the couple of volleys that could be fired from a muzzle-loader while the horsemen approached...”²⁹ This demonstrates why cavalry in the Civil War was so often relegated to reconnaissance and raiding supply lines, rather than assaulting infantry lines directly.

Yet another important element of both infantry and mounted warfare is guerrilla tactics. Most guerrillas were mounted, although if circumstances demanded it, they could easily dismount and fight on foot. This style of warfare was unique from standard skirmishing tactics which were used by the vanguard of traditionally structured armies. In contrast to skirmishers, who

²⁸ Charles B. Haydon and Stephen W. Sears. *For Country, Cause and Leader: The Civil War Journal of Charles B. Haydon*. (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 1993), 296.

²⁹ Walter, *Weapons of the Civil War*, 54.

would typically advance ahead of the standard infantry and harass the enemy, or provide a screen to their own army's retreat, guerrilla fighters would strike supply lines or civilian targets, and even terrorize innocent people for supporting one side or the other. In his book, *Guerrilla Warfare in Civil War Missouri, 1862*, Bruce Nichols discusses guerrilla warfare in depth. In describing a raid led by Confederate guerrilla William Clarke Quantrill, Nichols states, "The Rebels believed Lieutenant A. Bayard Nettleton's large patrol of 2nd Ohio Cavalry had left town after searching the place at dawn. They rode in, gunning down either an Ohio straggler or a local northern sympathizer."³⁰ This example showcases one of the frequent themes of Guerrilla warfare, which is the loss of civilian life. In contrast to civilians being hit by stray bullets (which was a legitimate risk for any who refused to flee the major battlefields), guerrillas on either side of the conflict were infamous for deliberately killing civilians. While actions such as this no doubt served as a distraction that drew patrols into the area, potentially depriving the frontlines of manpower, the most effective method of guerrilla warfare was its ability to disrupt logistics. Nichols provides an example of this when discussing the First Battle of Independence, on August 11th, 1862, saying the following, "... at four in the morning of August 11, Quantrill's men neutralized most of the Federal pickets, and the Rebel assault came into town from two directions, nearly taking the whole place by surprise."³¹ Nichols then goes on to importantly note, "They [the Confederates] did benefit, however, from the large amount of weapons, ammunition, equipment, and supplies captured at Independence, which were used to arm and equip the new soldiers."³² As can be seen from these two quotes, not only did guerrilla warfare draw patrols away from the frontline, but it also deprived one side of supplies while obtaining those supplies for the other. Thus, while how significant of a role guerrilla warfare

³⁰ Bruce Nichols, *Guerrilla Warfare in Civil War Missouri*. (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co. Inc., 2004), 14.

³¹ Nichols, *Guerrilla Warfare in Civil War Missouri*, 157.

³² Nichols, *Guerrilla Warfare in Civil War Missouri*, 158.

played is open to interpretation, there is no denying that it served, at the very least, as a major nuisance to the conventional armies of both the Confederacy and the Union. Guerrilla warfare had both tactical and strategic significance. Tactically, it could cause short-term disruptions to supply lines, whose results could be seen immediately. In the strategic long-term, it could lead to a diversion of manpower, and as casualties piled up in these small-scale battles, the deprivation of much-needed manpower which otherwise could have been deployed to the frontline of major engagements.

Guerrilla warfare was in many ways a hybridization of mounted and foot combat. Conventional cavalry often served similar functions, but with notable differences. Some important uses of cavalry throughout the war were reconnaissance and the disruption of enemy logistics. John Wilson Phillips, whose diary has survived (and of which Robert G. Athearn has provided a forward to), was a Union cavalry officer, whose primary responsibilities included scouting in Northern Virginia. Phillips also saw action at Gettysburg, where he was wounded but survived.³³ Valuable insight into the role cavalry played in the Civil War can be gained from Phillips' journal. When describing his cavalry company's raid into Virginia, he wrote the following, "Passed Spotsylvania C[ourt] H[ouse] about 10 A.M. Reached Beaver Dam Station on the Virg Central R.R. about 4 P.M. Burned the Station and a large quantity of wood. Tore up the track and telegraph for some distance."³⁴ This demonstrates how much of a hindrance cavalry could pose to either side of the war. Regardless of cavalry's effectiveness (or ineffectiveness) in pitched battles, their mobility allowed for quick raids which often yielded debilitating consequences. Phillips also describes the use of skirmishers by the Confederates, demonstrating both how much of a nuisance they could pose, and their vulnerability to cavalry. As

³³ John Wilson Phillips and Robert G. Athearn. "The Civil War Diary of John Wilson Phillips," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 62, no. 1 (1954): 95.

³⁴ Phillips and Athearn, "The Civil War Diary," 96.

Phillips states, “I was ordered on picket and remained there until 10 o.c. a.m. to day. We were fired into just as we started but no harm done. We were harassed [*sic*] for a mile or two with the rascals in our rear but finally we halted and charged them with one squadron and so effectively drove them that they staid away.”³⁵ This demonstrates what has been previously mentioned, that skirmishers are more of a harassing force than one capable of taking decisive action. Furthermore, it must be noted that skirmishers, in their typical scattered formations, would have been far more vulnerable to cavalry charges than regular infantry organized into a tighter formation. This signifies both one of the weaknesses of skirmishing and one of cavalry’s greatest strengths and uses. This is also additional reason infantry formations were typically so tightly packed, as it served as an effective counter to potential cavalry attacks.

Another soldier, Confederate cavalryman John Coffee Williamson, also kept a diary. Williamson saw action in the Battle of Chickamauga (1863), among others.³⁶ The surviving parts of his diary do not cover his entire length of military service, but rather only a mounted foray into Union-controlled Tennessee in 1864 for the purpose of raiding supply lines. When describing this raid, Williamson wrote, “19th. Day light found us encamped on the Athens road near old Haley’s. We took up the line of march soon and took Riceville Road where we arrived about 10 o’clock, and then we commenced burning the railroad and destroyed about 7 miles of it and encamped in 4 miles of Athens.”³⁷ Thus, it seems the experiences of John Coffee Williamson are much the same as Union cavalryman John Wilson Phillips. Both men undertook forays into hostile territory for the purpose of disrupting communication, transportation, and supply lines. These examples should be evidence enough of how significant a role cavalry had outside of direct combat, and demonstrate that military officers

³⁵ Phillips and Athearn, “The Civil War Diary,” 97.

³⁶ J. C. Williamson, “The Civil War Diary of John Coffee Williamson,” *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 15, no. 1 (1956): 61.

³⁷ Williamson, “The Civil War Diary,” 63.

were well aware of how best to put cavalry to use. As sending cavalry headfirst against infantry (especially those armed with repeating or breech-loaded weapons, or massed-formations of standard infantry) was at best ineffective and at worst suicidal, it seems they were rarely utilized in such a fashion. It is not too far a stretch to likewise assume that infantry would not have been ordered to charge the enemy head-on if it was not the most effective method available. In this regard, it appears Civil War officers had a thorough understanding of how best to employ each type of soldier, and artillery crews were no exception to this.

Artillery often served as one of the most decisive factors in Civil War combat. In his article, "Civil War Artillery," Eugene B. Canfield conducts a thorough summary on the significance of both smoothbore and rifled artillery at Gettysburg. In noting the variety of cannons in use by the time Gettysburg was fought, Canfield says:

On the field at Gettysburg were emplaced 415 guns, of which 182 were Confederate and 233 Union. Although 60 per cent of the Union guns were rifles, while the Confederates had 50 per cent rifles, the artillery of both antagonists was made up primarily of three types of guns: 12-pounder smoothbores (Napoleons), 10-pounder parrott rifles, and 3-inch ordnance rifles. Earlier in the war the 6-pounder smoothbore also had seen service, but it was gradually replaced as the rifles and heavier smoothbores became available.³⁸

It is noteworthy that despite the introduction of rifled cannons, the 12-pounder Napoleon remained a staple of Civil War armies on either side of the conflict. As was the case for most tactics, there was a reason for the continued use of Napoleonic cannons. When discussing the various shot types (solid shot, shells, case, and canister shot), Canfield notes, "Throwing canister represented one

³⁸ Eugene B. Canfield, "Civil War Artillery," *Ordnance* 41, no. 219 (1956): 436.

of the few cases where smoothbores outshone the rifles, since the rifles, for an equivalent weight shot, had a much smaller bore and could not hold as many balls.”³⁹ In simple terms, smoothbores loaded with canister shots essentially operated as oversized shotguns, hurling countless projectiles which would decimate infantry formations. Similarly, smoothbore shotguns to this day remain a worthy foe to rifles in certain situations, such as close-range engagements. The 12-pounder Napoleon thus remained the most efficient cannon for close-range use. While the improved accuracy of rifled cannons was a significant factor in Civil War warfare (especially for its ability to harass opposing artillery batteries), the fact the smoothbore remained relevant demonstrates that the introduction of these new technologies did not always warrant major changes in strategy or tactics. Patrick H. White, a Union artillery officer with Taylor’s Battery (and later a Chicago battery, the Mercantile Battery), kept a diary that provides invaluable insight and firsthand accounts of a number of battles. In addition to this, White was notably astute for a relatively low-ranking soldier, and noted the following as his army arrived near Shiloh Church, “I always thought it very strange that our generals did not throw up a little breastworks in our front, from snake creek on the northland Lick Creek on the south, which ran almost at right angles with the Tennessee, and em[p]ty into it about three miles apart. These were the right and left defenses of our lines.”⁴⁰ These are intelligent observations from White, who himself was an officer, albeit not a high-ranking one. He also gave an account that demonstrates the deadly firepower artillery brought to the battlefield, stating the following,

I called to the men to do[u]ble shot their pieces.
[A]t the second discharge 3 of their field officer’s
horses came into our line. After our first discharge

³⁹ Canfield, *Civil War Artillery*, 437.

⁴⁰ Patrick H. White and J. E. Boos “Civil War Diary of Patrick H. White.” *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society (1908-1984)* 15, no. 3/4 (1922): 652.

they gave us a volley which passed over our heads, and our next was more effective as it was at point blank range with the muzzles deprest. [W]e killed near 400 of them, as that part of the ground was not fought over afterwards and the bodys was counted by the detail who enterd them.”⁴¹

This is a demonstration of an artillery crew inflicting regiment-sized losses upon the enemy. In this case, the Confederate attempt at charging the Union battery does indeed seem to have been suicidal. Risks have to be taken in battle, however, and perhaps had the Confederate volley not overshot the Union artillerymen (an example of the complications associated with sighting of Minie ball-rifles), results would have been much different. At the very least, this does call into question the degree of risk in charging a fortified position supported by artillery. However, when ground must be taken from the enemy, the question remains of what the alternative to a massed-infantry charge could possibly have been.

Conclusion

This collection of primary and secondary sources demonstrates that contrary to popular myth, Civil War officers and enlisted men alike were well aware of the technologies they were dealing with. They were professional soldiers who knew what they were doing, and rather than naively walking into danger, they knowingly faced these dangers despite the risk it posed to their mortal bodies. Furthermore, they utilized terrain to their strategic and tactical advantage, in ways that capitalized on new military technologies. While many examples exist of poor judgment on the attacking side’s part, the technology available at the time simply did not allow for the abandonment of long-established tactics. These sources have shown that new strategies and tactics were

⁴¹ White and Boos, “Civil War Diary of Patrick H. White,” 653.

implemented alongside the introduction of new technologies, but they coincided with the old ones, rather than replacing them outright. With this in mind, it seems the sources included support the conclusions this meta-analysis sought to prove.

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Author Bio

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History in the Making

The San Bernardino Daily Sun and Local Reporting of the Great War

By Jeff LeBlanc

Abstract: The scope and ferocity of World War I (1914-1918) shocked the world. It was the first conflict that was reported to the public in near real-time, engrossing people around the world. This paper analyzes the reporting on World War I by a regional American newspaper in Southern California, from America's initial debate about entering the war in early 1917 until the end of hostilities in 1918. This paper makes use of the newspaper articles printed by the San Bernardino Daily Sun to analyze and evaluate the substantive content and underlying purpose of news stories published by the Daily Sun during the period immediately preceding and covering the First World War. This analysis will show that the Daily Sun's reporting on World War I was remarkably transparent, accurate, and contemporaneous. Further, the people of San Bernardino were well-informed and took an intense interest in the war before America was even formally involved. The San Bernardino Daily Sun published accurate information from Europe through the Associated Press as well as numerous patriotic and local interest stories about the war, regional involvement, and the economic and political ramifications of the conflict. These insights into rural American society through the lens of the San Bernardino Daily Sun's war reporting provide a window into the past and a fascinating look at the reaction to the most significant historical event of its time, World War I.

Introduction

World War I was the world's first modern, industrial war. The war caused the death of empires and heralded the death of the

European world order and the rise of the American. The war was widely reported on around the world; the advent of wireless transmission technology, radio, and cable networks linked the fighting in Europe with the broader world, allowing news organizations to transmit information globally with remarkable speed. The early twentieth century was a period of transition; although new technologies were influencing warfare and communication, for the average American, the local newspaper remained the only source of news.

Located in southern California sixty-one miles east of Los Angeles, San Bernardino County experienced explosive growth in the early twentieth century. The county population almost doubled between 1900 and 1910.¹ However; this still resulted in a very sparse population density of fewer than two persons per square mile.² San Bernardino was the largest geographic county in the country, although much of its land consisted of inhospitable deserts and mountains. The City of San Bernardino was founded in 1854. By the beginning of the twentieth century, it was the regional hub for the Santa Fe, Union Pacific, and Southern Pacific Railroads.³ With a population of 6,150 in 1900, as a result of the California land rush and the presence of the railroad hub, the population of San Bernardino City was 14,068 by 1910 and growing fast.⁴ Although San Bernardino had local papers from 1862 until 1886, most were published weekly versus daily; examples include *The Guardian* (1862-1864) and *The San Bernardino Weekly Times* (1876 -1886). By 1886, the population supported a daily local paper, *The Courier* (1886-1894). In 1886, *The Courier* changed its name to *The Daily Sun*. The *Sun* has been in continuous operation

¹ *United States Census*, “1910 Census Abstract,” accessed March 28, 2022, <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1910/abstract/supplement-ca.pdf>, 578; In 1900, the county population was 27,929 people, but by 1910, the population had doubled to 56,706.

² “*United States Census*,” 568.

³ City of San Bernardino Public Library, “Local History,” accessed February 16, 2022, <https://www.sbcity.org/cityhall/library/services/history/default.asp>

⁴ “*United States Census*,” 578.

since 1894.⁵ By 1917, the *Sun* and its readers were connected to the world and reporting global news to its readers at a time when other news sources were unavailable or in distant cities. Thus, the *Sun* provided San Bernardino's people with an incomparable source of local news and access to events of national and international importance.

The *Sun*'s reporting on the war did not supplant but rather supplemented its usual publication of the news. However, the importance of the war to the *Sun*'s editors nevertheless permeated its pages. Descriptions of major battles were printed beside advertisements by local merchants and news of civic events and activities; the *Sun*'s readers could learn of a sale at the local car dealership while simultaneously reading about the American war effort or the activities of the YMCA. While civilian life continued in San Bernardino, the importance of the war to the *Sun* and its readership is clearly evident and is thus the focus of this paper.

This paper will analyze the kind and quality of information available to the *Sun*'s readers during the war, San Bernardino's local involvement in the war effort, and how the *Sun*'s news was procured. By doing so, it provides insight into the lives of San Bernardino's people and the functioning of the American press during World War I. This paper chronologically analyzes the *Sun*'s reporting during four distinct phases of World War I from 1917 to 1918. American involvement in the war: (1) the political actions and preparations to join the war; (2) America's first major campaign on the defensive against Germany's Operation *Michael*; (3) the Champagne-Marne offensive where American and French troops stopped Germany's last major strategic attack; and (4) the Meuse-Argonne offensive that ultimately ended the war. These four phases encompass in various ways the politics of the war as well as situations where American forces were engaged as aggressors and defenders, good news and bad. The intent is to

⁵ University of California Riverside, "California Digital Newspaper Collection San Bernardino Sun 1894-1997," accessed February 16, 2022, <https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=cl&cl=CL1&sp=SBS> hereinafter cited as "San Bernardino Sun: Volume, Number, Date."

review and analyze the news and how it was transmitted to the people of San Bernardino during very different phases and circumstances, victory and defeat, offense and defense. This analysis shall find that the people of San Bernardino were remarkably well informed regardless of the military or political situation. They had access to detailed and graphic news from the front within a day of events. Additionally, the *Sun* published inspirational local stories and patriotic “puff” pieces to rally San Bernardinans to the war effort while providing an accurate, detailed account of the war.

American Declaration of War - March 30 through April 6, 1917

The war began on July 28, 1914, when the Austro-Hungarian Empire declared war on Serbia. However, the United States remained neutral because it was not involved in the tangle of alliances that drew most major European powers into the war. American public and political opinion was predominantly neutralist in the early war years, with President Woodrow Wilson himself campaigning with the slogan, “He Kept Us Out of War!”⁶ Although there was a general feeling that the war was imperialist or European, there was nevertheless growing American concern as American interests were impacted by hostilities. The sinking of the *Lusitania* in May 1915, unrestricted submarine warfare and the destruction of American merchant ships, and the sensationalism surrounding espionage, including the Zimmermann telegram, helped an increasing pro-Entente and pro-intervention American government direct public opinion towards intervention.⁷⁷

Despite his 1916 anti-war campaign, Woodrow Wilson

⁶ Alan Axelrod, *Selling the Great War: The Making of American Propaganda*, Palgrave MacMillan (2009), preface page x.

⁷ John Milton Cooper, Jr., *Woodrow Wilson*, 2009, Vintage, at 341–2; Doenecke, Justus D, *Nothing Less Than War: “A New History of America’s Entry Into World War I,”* Studies in Conflict, Diplomacy and Peace Series. 2011, University Press of Kentucky, at 286. Retrieved March 3, 2022.

began maneuvering the United States into direct involvement in the war throughout late 1916 and early 1917. On April 2, 1917, President Wilson asked for a special joint session of Congress to discuss and vote upon the entry of the United States into the war. Wilson addressed Congress and asked for a “war declaration, stronger navy, new army of 500,000 men, full cooperation with Germany’s foes.”⁸ The United States Senate passed a resolution declaring war on Germany on April 4, and the House of Representatives followed on April 6.⁹ A declaration of war against the Austro-Hungarian Empire followed on December 7, 1917, after the severing of diplomatic relations between the two powers and the ongoing conflict with Germany.¹⁰

The analysis of the *San Bernardino Daily Sun*’s coverage of the declaration of war begins with the March 30, 1917, edition. Although there are earlier articles discussing the politics and ramifications of the war, the coverage that day directly related to the eventual declaration of war on April 6th through its two front-page stories. The first was provided to the *Sun* through the Associated Press (AP) and discussed President Wilson’s preparation for his anticipated April 2nd, Congressional address advocating for a declaration of war against Germany.¹¹

The second story bears a deeper analysis. Located in the center of the front page, this story, presumably written by a local reporter, is a locally written patriotic “puff” piece graphically ensconced in American flag pillars carried by two fierce eagles and

⁸ “*President Calls for War Declaration, Stronger Navy, New Army of 500,000 Men, Full Cooperation With Germany’s Foes,*” *The New York Times*, April 2, 2017, <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/big/0402.html>, accessed March 3, 2022.

⁹ Jennifer K. Elsea and Matthew C. Weed, “Declarations of War and Authorizations for the Use of Military Force: Historical Background and Legal Implications,” (April 18, 2014), Retrieved March 3, 2022, 11.

¹⁰ Jennifer Elsea, “Declaration of War and Authorizations,” 11.

¹¹ Robert H. Ziegler, *America’s Great War: World War I and the American Experience*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., (2000), 55; *San Bernardino Sun*; Volume 46, Number 26, March 30, 1917.

entitled, in a display of verbose irony; “San Bernardino Engages in Wonderful Demonstration of Unostentatious Patriotism.”¹² The “Unostentatious Patriotism” story begins with a lengthy pledge by “the citizens of San Bernardino in mass meeting assembled: That we pledge to the government of the United States in the present crisis, our united support, and, if need be, our treasures and our lives.”¹³ The pledge continues for four more paragraphs commending the government, promising support, pledging aid to the local militia unit (Company K), and further directing that local offices and officers have “the flag of our country constantly displayed from all public buildings, schoolhouses, and flagpoles in the parks until the issue raised between our country and the German empire shall have been settled.”¹⁴ This *ostentatious* display of patriotic support is indicative of the level of public fervor surrounding the country’s probable entry into the war and is further interesting because, as of the date of publication, there was no formal “issue raised” between the United States and Germany. However, it is clear from this article that, for the people of San Bernardino, the declaration of war was a foregone conclusion even before President Wilson’s request to Congress. The remainder of the article includes patriotic appeals from local leaders such as Mayor George H. Wixom and interview snippets from officers in Company K. The article also claims that some 7,500 people from San Bernardino and surrounding towns participated in a “demonstration of gigantic proportions in the form of a parade and mass meeting at Pioneer Park in San Bernardino.”¹⁵ “Unostentatious Patriotism” indeed, because if true, the 7,500 people in attendance would have equaled about half of the total population of San Bernardino city itself.

The March 31, 1917, coverage included a variety of general news articles about American military preparations nationally, the status of local Company K, and further discussion about President

¹² San Bernardino Sun; Volume 46, Number 26, March 30, 1917.

¹³ San Bernardino Sun, Volume 46, Number 26, March 30, 1917.

¹⁴ San Bernardino Sun, Volume 46, Number 26, March 30, 1917.

¹⁵ San Bernardino Sun, Volume 46, Number 26, March 30, 1917.

Wilson's anticipated justification for his request for a war declaration. The March 31st edition also contained two interesting front-page articles. The first discusses American captives of German commerce raiders, the *Sun's* publishing of which can reasonably be considered implicit support of President Wilson's war request.¹⁶ The second article is an uncredited story about former President McKinley's Secretary of the Treasury, Lyman J. Gage, proposing protection for American shipping but stating that "I hold at the present time it is neither wise nor necessary immediately to declare war against Germany."¹⁷ The vast majority of the *Sun's* stories were pro-war, likely in preparation for the perceived inevitability of the declaration of war and implicitly supportive of Wilson's upcoming congressional speech. The cover page of the March 31st edition contains five articles either in support of the war or providing information on American preparation; the anti-war article quoting Mr. Gage is the sole exception.¹⁸ It would seem that Mr. Gage was a pacifist and, thus, a proponent of America's continued armed neutrality.¹⁹ The *Sun's* April 1, 1917, coverage contains no stories about either the war or Wilson's impending speech to Congress. The *Sun* did not publish on Monday, and thus there was no printed edition for April 2, 1917. The April 3rd edition is almost entirely devoted to Wilson's speech; local military preparations involving San Bernardino's Company K, and further allegedly provocative

¹⁶ San Bernardino Sun, Volume 46, Number 26, March 30, 1917.

¹⁷ San Bernardino Sun, Volume 46, Number 26, March 30, 1917.

¹⁸ San Bernardino Sun, Volume 46, Number 26, March 30, 1917.

¹⁹ It would appear that Mr. Gage, who had been known for his conservative administration of the First National Bank of Chicago and the United States Trust Company and a staunch conservative proponent of the gold standard, became a staunch pacifist in his later years. In 1906, the Washington Times Magazine reported that Mr. Gage had joined a Theosophist cult in Southern California run by Kathrine Tingley, who "rules over an almost terrestrial paradise with Czar-like authority." Washington Times Magazine, July 15, 1906, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026749/1906-07-15/ed-1/seq-48/> (accessed April 26, 2022)

actions by Germany.²⁰ On April 3, 1917, the *Sun* proudly reported that Company K left to join the eleventh Regiment at Arcadia, with its Commanding Officer Leo A. Stromeer quoted as encouraging that “[a]ny time the residents of the city may visit they will be welcomed in our camp. The parents, especially the mothers are invited to see their sons in army life...”²¹ The entire front page of the *Sun* on April 3rd is devoted to war reporting, with the exception of three short partial stories including the installation of the first female congresswoman, Jeanette Rankin of Montana.²² One of these stories was an Associated Press story about the sinking of the United States’ first armed merchant vessel, the *SS Aztec*, by a German submarine off the coast of France on April 2, 1917.²³ The timing of the *Aztec*’s sinking is interesting from a couple of perspectives; first, even while the United States President was about to ask Congress to declare war on Germany, the Germans were freely targeting U.S. shipping; and second, as an armed merchantman, the *Aztec* was exactly the type of defensive response advocated by Mr. Gage on March 31st. Its sinking a few days later serves as a poignant counterpoint to his pacifist position of armed neutrality.

The *Sun*’s April 4th and 5th editions report extensively on the debates in Congress and the state of American preparedness for war. The April 4th headline reads “Rush War Plan as Congress Delays Action,” while the front page contains stories provided by the Associated Press about the recruitment of a San Bernardino contingent for former president Theodore Roosevelt’s military division, a description of the violent German bombardment of Rheims, and the graduation of 183 midshipmen from the naval academy at Annapolis.²⁴ On April 5th, the *Sun* continued covering the ongoing congressional debate as well as additional news reporting on the war and American preparedness under the

²⁰ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 46, Number 28, April 3, 1917.

²¹ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 46, Number 28, April 3, 1917.

²² San Bernardino Sun, Volume 46, Number 26, March 30, 1917.

²³ San Bernardino Sun, Volume 46, Number 26, March 30, 1917.

²⁴ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 46, Number 29, April 4, 1917.

headlines “Senate Passes War Resolution” and “Break with Austria Now Seems Certain.”²⁵

With war imminent, one story in the April 4, 1917 edition of the *Sun* stands out; this is a local story about a labor strike among Mexican lemon and orange pickers throughout San Bernardino County— “[w]ith nearly 1,000 Mexicans, it is estimated, on a strike in San Bernardino county, probe of the source of agitation was actively started underway by a detective agency” and the investigation was focused on the affiliation of “at least one well-dressed Mexican” believed to be from Los Angeles.²⁶ Easily dismissed as a story of war paranoia and ethnic fear-mongering, the clear implication that labor in the important local citrus industry was being agitated by an outside source manifested many people’s genuine fears surrounding the war. The *Sun* used this local story to drive up fear and concern about America’s internal security. San Bernardino readers would likely be considering the coincidence of Mexican agitation only a few months after the German Foreign Secretary, Alfred Zimmermann, was caught clumsily seeking to enlist the help of Mexico in a war against the United States in January 1917.²⁷ On April 6, 1917, the United States declared war on Germany. Unsurprisingly, the passing of the war resolution by the House of Representatives (the Senate had passed it on April 4th) was the top story because the United States was then at war with the German Empire.²⁸ However, in addition to the usual stories about American war preparations, a couple of interesting stories are reported in the *Sun*.

The first is an associated press story entitled “U.S. Will Not Sever Relations With Either Austria or Turkey,” discussing the continued neutrality between the three powers despite their respective active belligerence against allies on each side.²⁹ The second story was locally written and addressed the April 4th

²⁵ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 46, Number 30, April 5, 1917.

²⁶ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 46, Number 30, April 5, 1917.

²⁷ Ziegler, *America’s Great War: World War I*, 59

²⁸ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 46, Number 31, April 6, 1917.

²⁹ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 46, Number 31, April 6, 1917.

Mexican labor strike story with a rising sense of Germanophobia, entitled “Wireless Plant of a German Family is Closed: Probe of Secret Service Men Here Extends to Needles; Strike, too.”³⁰ This second story seeks to directly tie the Mexican labor strike with phantom German spies allegedly trafficking information in the isolated desert town of Needles, California. The alleged evidence of suspicious activity levied against the family operating a wireless plant in the hills above Needles consisted of nothing more than their German ethnicity and the fact that their son left school and that he was “now known for the first time to be an expert wireless operator.”³¹ This fascinating, rambling story continues by describing the discharge of two Germans from subsidiary companies of the Santa Fe railway, one of whom was alleged to have held a meeting with two “peddlers” who once inquired after him in San Bernardino’s alleged center of German activity, Needles. The story continues without any logical link between suspected German malfeasance and the ongoing Mexican strike by using baseless innuendo to link Germany with the labor strike feebly; “[t]he Mexican strike, started by agitators the identity of whom is anxiously sought by officers, continues to spread” and “[m]any Mexicans with tears in their eyes told officials they wanted to continue work, but had been threatened with death if they did.”³² This local story appears to be nothing more than ethnically driven fear-mongering.

However, the reporter perhaps unintentionally reveals a legitimate motivation behind the labor strike when discussing the refusal of multiple white men to perform the Mexican’s menial labor: “Yesterday, the number of white men who had quit their places because of the request to do the work the Mexicans had been doing increased to twenty-five.”³³ There is no evidence that Germans were involved in the strike whatsoever.

The stories published by the *Sun* in the week preceding the

³⁰ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 46, Number 31, April 6, 1917.

³¹ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 46, Number 31, April 6, 1917.

³² San Bernardino Sun; Volume 46, Number 31, April 6, 1917.

³³ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 46, Number 31, April 6, 1917.

declaration of war were a predictable combination of local and national military preparation stories, status updates on the request and procedure for declaring war, and articles demonstrating German aggression and brutality and thus implicitly supporting an eventual declaration of war *to protect American interests*. However, there are a couple of aberrant stories, including the March 31, 1917, anti-war article by former treasury secretary Gage and the rather shallow attempts to relate Mexican labor issues with German infiltration. Nevertheless, the news reported by the *Sun*, especially factual stories about the conduct of the war, are notably detailed and timely; often appearing on the pages of the *Sun* within a day of the events in Europe or Washington, a delay which is in line with a newspaper's daily publication cycle. The *Sun*'s progress, preparation, and propaganda stories, however, are often guilty of hyperbole and are clearly intended to both report the federal government's activities but also implicitly to support those activities through favorable and sometimes sensational publication. Regardless, it is clear that in the debate leading up to the April 6th declaration of war, the *Sun*'s readers were well informed, and local interest stories on preparedness, the strike, and dastardly Germans imply that they were also very involved and interested in the ramifications of the debate.

Operation Michael, 21 March – 6 April 1918

On December 15, 1917, the Central Powers and Russia signed an armistice and initiated peace negotiations. The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was signed between the Central Powers and Russia on March 3, 1918, removing Russia from the war and freeing significant German resources for transfer to the Western Front.³⁴ The German general staff recognized that they had a brief

³⁴ James Edward Edmonds, "Military Operations France and Belgium, 1918: The German March Offensive and its Preliminaries," *History of the Great War Based on Official Documents, by Direction of the Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence. Vol. I*, 1935, Imperial War Museum & Battery Press: London, 140.

opportunity to exploit an advantage in manpower and materiel before American military forces arrived in overwhelming numbers in the West.³⁵ As a consequence, they planned a series of offensives to try to win the war in the West while they had that advantage. The Germans planned four offensives against *Entente* positions in the West, codenamed *Michael*, *Georgette*, *Gneisenau*, and *Blucher-Yorck*. These became known as the German spring offensives.

Beginning on March 21, 1918, the Germans launched their main attack, "Operation *Michael*," from the Hindenburg line between the towns of Arras, St. Quentin, and La Fere in France.³⁶ *Michael* intended to use local German superiority, thanks to reinforcements from Russia, to overwhelm the *Entente* defensive positions, drive the British Expeditionary Force into the sea, take control of channel ports, and drive a wedge between the British and French armies. The German attack was focused on an area of the front only recently occupied by the British Expeditionary Force following the German retreat to the Hindenburg line in February-April, 1917.³⁷ The German Chief of Staff, Erich Ludendorff, assembled a formidable force of 74 divisions, 6,600 artillery pieces, 3,500 mortars, and 326 fighter aircraft to attack along a sixty-nine-kilometer section of the front.³⁸ Facing the initial German attack was the heavily outnumbered British Third and Fifth Armies, which were eventually augmented by large numbers of French, British, and (for the first time on the Western Front) Americans.

Early on March 21, 1918, a massive German artillery barrage saturated sixty kilometers of the British front line, causing

³⁵ Edmonds, "Military Operations France and Belgium," 139.

³⁶ C. Falls, "Military Operations France and Belgium 1917: The German Retreat to the Hindenburg Line and the Battles of Arras," *History of the Great War Based on Official Documents*, by Direction of the Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence. Vol. I 1940, Imperial War Museum & Battery Press, London, 110-116.

³⁷ Falls, "Military Operations France and Belgium," 110-116.

³⁸ Martin Kitchen, *The German Offensives of 1918*, (Stroud: Tempus, 2001), 288.

chaos, damaging defensive capabilities, and disrupting communications. When German infantry followed up the artillery barrage with a general attack, they advanced through the British lines, despite often stubborn resistance. By March 24th, the British had been pushed back to the Somme River, and both British and French reinforcements were struggling to contain an extremely dangerous German attack that threatened the strategic balance in the West.³⁹ However, after three days of relentless combat, the German breakthrough bogged down. Nevertheless, the Germans continued to advance against stiffening British and French resistance. On March 25th, the first units of the United States Army were provided to the British to oppose the German advance.⁴⁰ The Germans continued to exploit *Entente's* disorganization and threatened to advance on the town of Amiens and drive a wedge between the French and British armies, which would have been a strategic disaster for the *Entente*. However, the *Entente* was able to throw fresh reinforcements in front of the German attack. The Germans lacked sufficient manpower and materiel to exploit their significant initial gains fully and were dangerously over-extended.⁴¹ Despite threatening the entire *Entente* front, the German attack petered out by April 6th. The Germans took approximately 3,100 square kilometers of territory and advanced as far as sixty-five kilometers into *Entente*-held territory but failed to break the *Entente* line or seize any of *Michael's* primary objectives.

Although *Michael* began on March 21, 1918, that day's edition of the *Sun* contained no stories about the offensive, likely because news of the attacks arrived after the *Sun* went to print. On March 21st, the *Sun* contained a number of Associated Press stories about the conduct of the war, including one where American units were in action near Venice, Italy: "Mustard Gas Dropped on Americans in Trench Warfare." However, the next day, March 22nd, the *Sun* began reporting on the German advance

³⁹ Ziegler, *America's Great War: World War I*, 96

⁴⁰ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 48, Number 22, March 26, 1918.

⁴¹ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 48, Number 22

and printed stories entitled “Teuton Drive Begun” and “Gigantic Smash Under Way Over 50 Miles of Line on Scale Hitherto Unknown in Great War.”⁴² Even on the first day of Operation *Michael*, its size and scope were remarkable and concerning. The *Sun* published three different stories on the ferocity of the German attack and Allied preparations, assuring readers that despite initial German success, the *Entente* was prepared and confident. As a result, the *Sun*’s reporting on the German offensive is accurate and detailed but also seeks to reassure readers by letting them know that the “British had been expecting the movement and had made great preparations for the drive” and that “Washington has Supreme Confidence that Allies will Defeat Drive.”⁴³

As the scope and severity of the German offensive became increasingly apparent, its coverage by the *Sun* increased. The March 23, 1918, edition was dominated by news of the war, in particular Operation *Michael*, the severity of which was broadcast to readers with two distinct front-page stories describing the events of the previous day under the overarching, all-capitalized headline “FRIGHTFUL LOSSES BY BOTH ARMIES IN TITANIC STRUGGLE.”⁴⁴ The *Sun*’s March 23rd stories were remarkably open about the fighting’s brutality and the uncertainty of success, noting that the “Ground is literally covered with dead” and that the German foreign office claimed to have captured “16,000 men and over 200 guns” in the fighting.⁴⁵ There does not appear to be any attempt to minimize the seriousness, danger, or brutality of the attack in the *Sun*, thus providing readers with a brutally accurate account of a very dangerous time for the *Entente* position.

The *Sun* balances the stark, brutal reality of the ongoing battle with a combination of hopefully patriotic reports and stories that appear designed to boost morale. For example, there is a story about a U.S. Navy gunboat capturing an armed German schooner,

⁴² San Bernardino Sun; Volume 48, Number 19, March 22, 1918.

⁴³ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 48, Number 19, March 22, 1918.

⁴⁴ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 48, Number 20, March 23, 1918.

⁴⁵ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 48, Number 20, March 23, 1918.

the *Alexander Agassiz*, off the western coast of Mexico.⁴⁶ The story of the arming and the subsequent capture of the *Agassiz* served as a story of success but also of caution and warning to the readership; that danger was close to home and suggested that Mexican interests were tied to those of Imperial Germany. Further stories detailed how local women organized sales booths to aid a local ThriftStamp campaign to raise money; how a further twenty-two men from San Bernardino county would be leaving for Camp Lewis, Washington; how Lieutenant De Vere Harden, the first American wounded in France was awarded the war cross by the French government. Other stories highlighted the alleged brutality of the Germans from the perspective of a released POW; and the death of a female Y.M.C.A. worker killed by a German bomb in Paris. Further, in addition to the story about the *Agassiz*, there was a curious local story about San Bernardino's local Moose Lodge no.476 evicting a bible study class for "suspected sedition," the implication in the story was that members of the bible group were pacifists and thus unpatriotic and unsupportive of the war effort, a position the loyal Moose could not tolerate.⁴⁷

By March 24, 1918, as the British were being pushed back to the Somme River, the *Sun* continued to provide accurate, informational reports on the brutal fighting; the "British Front is Driven Back Over a Line of Near 22 Miles" as the *Sun* reported that the "Germans have forced their way forward over a front approximately twenty-one miles in length, have penetrated to a depth of four or five miles west of Cambrai and have reached Ham, west of St. Quentin, about nine miles west of the British lines as the stood before the attack on Thursday" (reporting on the events of March 22, 1918).⁴⁸ The *Sun* also published a story about new German artillery that "rained nine-inch shells into Paris for hours."⁴⁹ The information available to the *Sun* through the Associated Press remained up to date and accurately described

⁴⁶ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 48, Number 20, March 23, 1918.

⁴⁷ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 48, Number 20, March 23, 1918.

⁴⁸ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 48, Number 21, March 24, 1918.

⁴⁹ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 48, Number 21, March 24, 1918.

battlefield conditions to the *Sun*'s readers, despite the brutal conditions and the continuing uncertainty of victory. In fact, news also reached San Bernardino from neutral sources through the Associated Press, with one story discussing a Danish report from the German press that stated, "The present battles are the final and decisive exertion of strength on the part of the German people before peace comes."⁵⁰ Within a day of events on the battlefield, San Bernardinans received detailed, accurate information about the status of the war and conditions in Europe, as well as a steady stream of local and national patriotic stories.

The next edition, on March 26th, continued to follow the German attack in great detail under the title "GIANT ARMIES ARE STILL LOCKED IN CONFLICT," however, despite continued German gains, the tone of the news became less concerned and more optimistic as the toll of German casualties was tallied, and Washington D.C. was confident despite the gains, "U.S. Military Experts See No Cause for Alarm, West Front Situation; Generals March and Wood Believe Hun Sure to be Defeated" as the Germans were growing overextended.⁵¹ The *Sun* further reported that the "British Have Practically Brought to a Halt the Great Smash by German Army on the West Front." The March 26, 1918, edition confirmed a report from General Pershing that, as of March 25th, "two regiments of American railroad engineers" were attached to British units and engaged in combat as American reserves were used to bolster allied lines.⁵² For Americans, this was the first time American units actively participated in the campaign, albeit as attachments to British units, and helped reinforce the significance of U.S. involvement and patriotic pride therein.

Reflecting the patriotic pride incumbent with direct American involvement, the March 26th edition of the *Sun* published two stories in the middle of the front page about patriotism and domestic support of the war effort. The first story

⁵⁰ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 48, Number 21, March 24, 1918.

⁵¹ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 48, Number 22, March 26, 1918.

⁵² San Bernardino Sun; Volume 48, Number 22, March 26, 1918.

described a fight in Benton, Illinois between Mrs. Francis Pergen—of Bohemian birth—and Henry Baker after Mr. Baker heard Mrs. Pergen make “disloyal remarks while waiting for her mail.”⁵³ Mr. Baker was arrested and fined, although his fine was paid “by public subscription,” whereas the accented Mrs. Pergen was “ridden on a rail through the main street” by several hundred members of the loyalty league.⁵⁴ Meanwhile, in the town of Lima, Ohio, a mob of patriotic citizens was “making a house-to-house canvass, dragging every suspected pro-German from his bed, taking him downtown and forcing him to salute the American flag, under pain of being hanged to a tree.”⁵⁵ While the *Sun* often ran patriotic news pieces, it is likely that the new, direct involvement of American units in the battle significantly increased the emotional stakes whereby, despite the almost farcical nature of these stories, they nevertheless represent both a warning and a rallying cry to people at home regarding proper conduct, loyalty, and support for America’s fighting men.

As Operation *Michael* began to stall as increasing allied reinforcements were brought to bear, the news reported to the people of San Bernardino similarly improved; on March 27th, the *Sun*’s front page headline was “OFFENSIVE IS SHOWING SIGNS OF SLOWING DOWN THOUGH FIGHTING HEAVY.”⁵⁶ The next day, the *Sun* contained further stories of massive “German Losses Estimated at 400,000 in Offensive” and “ALLIED ARMIES STRIKE BACK.”⁵⁷ By March 29, 1918, the news was that the German advance had been halted, and the *Entente* forces were retaking territory.⁵⁸ Further, the *Sun*’s stories showed an increased interest and pride in direct American involvement with stories about the area of front held by Americans and a quasi-biographical piece about General Von Gallwitz, the

⁵³ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 48, Number 22, March 26, 1918.

⁵⁴ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 48, Number 22, March 26, 1918.

⁵⁵ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 48, Number 22, March 26, 1918.

⁵⁶ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 48, Number 23, March 27, 1918.

⁵⁷ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 48, Number 24, March 28, 1918.

⁵⁸ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 48, Number 25, March 29, 1918.

German officer holding the front opposite American forces.⁵⁹ Readers were kept informed and were provided up-to-date information on the status of the battle and the war in general as the March 30th headline read “GERMAN SMASH HAS COME TO HALT,” and the American press reported on increasing American involvement either transporting supplies (March 31st) or sending 100,000 fresh troops to join the front (April 2nd).⁶⁰ By April 6th and 7th, the news from the front was less concerning as the German attack petered out, with the *Sun* reporting that “ALLIED LEGIONS STANDING FIRM BEFORE CITY OF AMIENS” and the focus of the *Sun*’s stories shifted to more general war stories such as the beginning of the liberty loan drive on April 6th, and local military recruitment updates.⁶¹ Although the war still dominated the pages of the *Sun*, the frenetic fervor of the reporting during the dangerous early days of Operation *Michael* was slowly replaced by more mundane war reporting. By early April, with the passing of the immediate military emergency in France, the *Sun*’s stories began to focus on more mundane stories such as the victory loan program, local recruitment, and general war stories. In particular, the shift in focus from the coverage of the German offensive to liberty loans shows the *Sun* presenting stories focused on the future conduct of the war rather than the exigent need presented by one contemporaneous battle. In other words, by selecting stories about liberty loans and recruitment in early April, the *Sun* implicitly recognized and communicated that the time of greatest danger and uncertainty had passed, and that America must therefore prepare for the next challenge.

The *Sun*’s reporting on Operation *Michael* occurred in an atmosphere of serious concern and military uncertainty. Germany had transferred hundreds of thousands of troops from the Eastern

⁵⁹ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 48, Number 25, March 29, 1918.

⁶⁰ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 48, Number 26, March 30, 1918; San Bernardino Sun; Volume 48, Number 27, March 31, 1918; San Bernardino Sun; Volume 48, Number 28, April 2, 1918.

⁶¹ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 48, Number 32, April 6, 1918; San Bernardino Sun; Volume 48, Number 33, April 7, 1918.

Front to the West to create significant local force superiority. Although American forces were not yet committed in large numbers, the *Entente* defense in *Michael* included the first use of American units on the front line in France, albeit in support of the British Expeditionary Force. *Michael* was reported as the largest battle of the war, and American readers, including those of the *Sun*, were kept informed on a daily basis, in great detail, on the conduct of the battle.

Additionally, stories presented by the *Sun* were of a remarkably varied perspective. Although the majority of the non-local war stories printed were provided by the Associated Press, many stories also originated from neutral sources like the Danes or even hostile sources like the German foreign ministry. The inclusion of multiple perspectives demonstrates the relatively open transmission of information through the American press and a lack of censorship from American authorities.⁶² Although technological limitations, especially the daily publication/print cycle of newspapers, meant that there was a delay of roughly one day between the occurrence of events and publication, the *Sun*'s readers were kept remarkably well informed of the events in Europe through a wide selection of factual news stories and local interest and patriotic pieces bringing the war and participation therein home to San Bernardinans. In fact, the quality of the information provided to readers is not dissimilar to the quality of modern press reports, factual information, whether good or bad news and the use of a variety of news sources to provide a balanced interpretation of events.

Champagne-Marne, 15–18 July 1918

Despite inflicting massive casualties on the *Entente* armies and

⁶² Beginning in April 1917, the government Committee on Public Information (CPI) controlled the flow of war information to the Press. The CPI's head, George Creel made it the CPI's policy to transmit both good news and bad news as Mr. Creel believed that openness would lead to increased patriotic participation and support. (See Axelrod, 107).

taking large amounts of territory, the German spring offensives, including Operation *Michael*, failed to achieve any of their strategic objectives. Further, while German resources were limited, American units were arriving on the Western Front in ever greater numbers to bolster the *Entente*. Although the *Entente* was able to recover from the horrendous casualties of the spring offensives, the Germans could not. In a last, desperate attempt to win the war, Ludendorff planned a further attack on the British Expeditionary Force through Flanders. To conceal the intent of that attack, Ludendorff planned a diversionary offensive against the French Fourth Army and its attached American units. However, the German attack on prepared French positions immediately stalled. By July 18, 1918, the *Entente* forces were reinforced and counter-attacked, driving the Germans back and putting them on the strategic defensive for the remainder of the war. As the Germans advanced on the Marne River, they met intense resistance from *Entente* units, including the famous “Rock of the Marne,” the 38th infantry regiment of the U.S. 3d infantry division.⁶³ This was the last German strategic offensive of the war and a battle in which an American unit played a pivotal role.

The *San Bernardino Sun* did not publish on Monday, July 15, 1918, so the first reporting on the Champagne-Marne Campaign occurred on Tuesday, July 16, 1918. When the July 16th edition was published, the vast majority of the front page and significant portions of the interior pages were devoted to the successful defense of the Marne and, in particular, the role played by American forces.⁶⁴ The July 16, 1918 edition of the *Sun* was heavily skewed towards America’s involvement in the war and contains nineteen articles taking up the majority of the *Sun*’s news space, with three general types of articles: (1) current news from the front; (2) pro-American Government patriotic pieces; and (3) local involvement stories.⁶⁵ The first page was dominated by news of the war, including the headline devoted to the American and

⁶³ Ziegler, *America’s Great War: World War I*, 97-8.

⁶⁴ *San Bernardino Sun*; Volume 48, Number 118, July 16, 1918.

⁶⁵ *San Bernardino Sun*; Volume 48, Number 118, July 16, 1918.

French defense of the Marne front the previous day: “FIRST DAY DRIVE A GERMAN DEFEAT; SAMMIES SMASH BACK TEUTON LINE.”⁶⁶

The *Sun*'s stories included a detailed description of the French and American front discussing the Marne defense almost within a day of the start of the battle entitled “Great Battle is Raging Over Front of 65 Miles in Attempt to Take Rheims.”⁶⁷ In remarkable detail, the main story discusses the German attack on the Marne, and troop placements, admits to limited breaches of the Marne defenses, and identifies the German strategic goal of Rheims.⁶⁸ The level of military detail included in the story is remarkable and demonstrative of the Committee for Public Information's policy of letting both good and bad news flow freely from the front with discussions of German armaments used; “[t]he Germans in addition to their tremendous expenditure of explosives and gas shells used numerous tanks against the lines;” up to date and militarily significant information was quickly available to the public, such as the use of German tanks.⁶⁹ Further articles discussed the generally positive conduct of the war with stories such as “German Hordes Have Lost Vast Deal of the ‘Pep’ in Former Drives on West,” which discusses the general exhaustion and over-stretching of German capabilities as a result of their offensives in the spring of 1918, notification that “Big Bertha” was “barking” as German long-range artillery targeted Paris and a frank discussion of previous failures in the face of German attacks and that the “Allied Lines Holding in Contrast Giving Way Before Former Drives.”⁷⁰ The *Sun*'s stories and headlines the following day, July 17, 1918, were equally open and descriptive of the state of the battle, describing heavy fighting “still in progress” east of

⁶⁶ “Sammie” was a slang term for Uncle Sam's Troops.

⁶⁷ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 48, Number 118, July 16, 1918.

⁶⁸ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 48, Number 118, July 16, 1918.

⁶⁹ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 48, Number 118, July 16, 1918; Alan Axelrod, *Selling the Great War: The Making of American Propaganda*, 2009, St. Martin's Press, 107.

⁷⁰ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 48, Number 118, July 16, 1918.

Rheims, complementing the work of American, French, and Italian soldiers, and that German gains were extremely limited against *Entente* defenses.⁷¹

The stories available in the *Sun* on July 16-17, 1918, are remarkable for a number of reasons. First, the use of wireless telegraphy technology enabled information to be transmitted from France's battlefield across the Atlantic Ocean to be received, vetted, edited, and then disseminated to local newspapers throughout the United States within a day of the actual event. This is evidence of a complex network of news organizations and multi-layered communications systems that provided fresh information to the American public with only a minor delay. Americans were receiving up-to-date and daily information on the war in Europe straight to their homes through their local newspaper.

Second, the stories run in the *San Bernardino Sun* are indicative of the practical implementation of the Committee on Public Information's policy of providing the American public with accurate information on battle conditions, the military situation, and strategic goals. This demonstrated George Creel's goal of information control but without censorship, to give the public the truth and thereby rally them to the cause.⁷² The result was an American populace that was knowledgeable about the conduct of the war and American involvement therein and thus was more easily engaged in the conduct of the war both overseas and at home.

In the two editions published during the Champagne-Marne campaign of July 15-17, 1918, the *San Bernardino Sun's* coverage consisted of more than factual "hard" news stories. A significant amount of the *Sun's* content during the campaign was of a more generic nature, unrelated to the conduct of the military campaign but nevertheless designed to elicit support for the war, engender feelings of involvement on the home front, and demonstrate the

⁷¹ *San Bernardino Sun*; Volume 48, Number 119, July 17, 1918.

⁷² Axelrod, *Selling the Great War: The Making of American Propaganda*, 107.

pro-active patriotism of national and regional leadership. On July 16th, the *Sun* contained seven separate patriotic war pieces, most of which were sourced by the *Sun* from the Associated Press.⁷³ On July 15th, the *Sun* ran stories about the removal of German songs from California music books, a puff piece about Bismarck, North Dakota, wanting to change its name, the delivery of 450 American-made “battle planes” to the war, poetry, and a cartoon all related tangentially to the war effort.⁷⁴ The purposes of these stories were two-fold; first, they involved American civil society in the war effort as a patriotic endeavor, and second, they identified the *other* in an “us versus them” exercise, which further engaged civilian society in the war and highlighted its importance.

Meuse-Argonne Offensive, September – 11 November 1918

Following the failure of the German spring offensives and the arrival of large numbers of American troops, the *Entente* used their significant resource advantage to begin attacking overextended German forces until an armistice was declared on November 11, 1918. The Meuse-Argonne offensive ultimately ended the war and was thus the largest and final involvement of American troops in the Allied effort.⁷⁵ With American forces now independently organized into three armies, General Pershing was eager to prove American strength in an offensive against the Germans. The poor state of the German army at this time had become increasingly obvious to *Entente* leadership as a result of unexpected gains in a contemporaneous British offensive, and Pershing, therefore, ordered the Americans to attack the heavily fortified German positions along the Meuse-Argonne frontier on September 26, 1918.⁷⁶ Ultimately, the *Entente* armies were on the offensive for the remainder of the war, pushing the Germans back until the

⁷³ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 48, Number 118, July 16, 1918.

⁷⁴ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 48, Number 118, July 16, 1918.

⁷⁵ Ziegler, *America's Great War: World War I*, 99.

⁷⁶ Ziegler, *America's Great War: World War I*, 99-100.

November 11th, armistice and Germany's unconditional surrender.

On September 27, 1918, the *Sun* reported on the offensive, proudly trumpeting that "AMERICANS LEAD GIGANTIC NEW ATTACK."⁷⁷ The patriotic pride emanates from the paper as the *Sun* published stories about the American onslaught, bragging that a "rush of Yanks twenty miles wide pushes Hun back; many towns and prisoners are taken."⁷⁸ The final campaign of the war had begun, and America's leading role generated significant excitement in the *Sun*.

On September 28th, there was a sense from the *Sun*'s featured stories that the *Entente* knew victory in the war was now possible, as stories such as "enemy gives ground in terrific fight" in the face of the American advance, praise for the "master strategy" of French field marshal Ferdinand Foch, and implicit recognition of the importance of the American economy to maintain the drive, in conjunction with liberty loan sales struck an optimistic chord. The *Sun*'s stories represent both hope and a vision of the future as the *Entente* increasingly pressured the Central Powers.⁷⁹

September 28, 1918, marked the start of the fourth liberty bond drive, with San Bernardino city's quota set at \$1,070,800 and the county's at \$2,739,050. There was a sense of excitement that America's economic and military might were now winning the war as the Germans were being pushed back and the Bulgarians had proposed a separate armistice.⁸⁰ The *Sun*'s good news continued over subsequent days; "ALLIED SMASH SETS 250 MILE LINE AFIRE FROM NORTH SEA TO VERDUN" (September 29th);⁸¹ the *Entente* was "demolishing Hindenburg fortified line with rapidity" as the French retook St. Quentin "and many important towns" (October 2nd);⁸² and the *Sun* was optimistic that the

⁷⁷ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 49, Number 22, September 27, 1918.

⁷⁸ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 49, Number 22, September 27, 1918.

⁷⁹ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 49, Number 23, September 28, 1918.

⁸⁰ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 49, Number 23, September 28, 1918.

⁸¹ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 49, Number 24, September 29, 1918.

⁸² San Bernardino Sun; Volume 44, Number 26, October 2, 1918.

Germans were being beaten as it crowed on October 3rd, that a “NEW RETREAT IS BEGUN BY HUN ARMY” and that there were “signs despotic control fast weakens in Germany” as neutral European countries described the “weakening of the despotic control which the military elements in Germany and Austria have imposed upon the civilian population.”⁸³

Whereas earlier reporting focused on carnage and casualties, by the autumn of 1918, the *Sun*’s stories had a definitively more hopeful tone, clearly recognizing that this advance, with extensive American participation, was different. In fact, in conjunction with news on the diplomatic front, the battlefield news had grown increasingly exuberant, with daily reports of American and other *Entente* advances and, as one article on October 8, 1918, “German Forces Falling Back in Great Disorder.”⁸⁴ By mid-October, the *Sun* was printing daily updates on *Entente* advances, the collapse of German and other Central Powers’ armies, and the desperate pleas for peace from Germany’s allies.

On October 13th, the *Sun* announced that “WILSON’S PEACE TERMS ARE ACCEPTED - Germans Will Evacuate All Territory.”⁸⁵ The *Sun* printed a story quoting a telegram from the German foreign office acceding to President Wilson’s demands for peace.⁸⁶ The war seemed nearly over, although “Washington is however skeptical” and the “nation warned may not yet mean an end of the war,” a seeming response to Wilson’s demand that he would only negotiate with a democratic Germany and not an autocracy.⁸⁷ In fact, in the next edition on October 15th, the *Sun* quoted Wilson in its headline—”SAYS “AUTOCRACY MUST GO,” as it was now clear to the *Sun*’s readers and the American public in general that the end of the war was near.⁸⁸ In October

⁸³ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 44, Number 27, October 3, 1918.

⁸⁴ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 44, Number 26, October 13, 1918.

⁸⁵ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 44, Number 31, October 8, 1918.

⁸⁶ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 44, Number 36, October 13, 1918.

⁸⁷ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 44, Number 36, October 13, 1918.

⁸⁸ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 44, Number 37, October 15, 1918.

1918, the American press (the *Sun* included) kept the American public well informed of the diplomatic and military news as *Entente* forces continued to push Central Power forces back and members of the Central Powers began suing for peace. However, Wilson, who rose to the diplomatic leadership of the *Entente* powers, spurned any peace offer other than unconditional surrender that might have otherwise left the regimes of Germany and Austria intact.⁸⁹ On October 6, 1918, Austria asked for an armistice and pled directly to President Wilson, which highlighted his diplomatic ascendancy and further, as reported by the *Sun*, “Austro-Hungary accepts Wilson’s peace program basic principals.”⁹⁰ However, this was rejected without unconditional surrender and the dissolution of Austria’s autocratic regime. Diplomatically, throughout October 1918, it was clear that while American forces inexorably advanced on Germany, Wilson and the Americans were in ascendancy. Throughout the whole ordeal, San Bernardino was kept fully apprised of the military and the diplomatic situation, including spurned peace offers, counter offers, and submissions by the Central Powers.

On October 17, 1918, the *Sun* reported that “Dutch and Swiss sources” claimed that the German Kaiser was likely to abdicate, even as his armies continued to retreat and his remaining allies sued for peace.⁹¹ Throughout the process of offer, counter-offer, and demand for surrender, the people of San Bernardino were kept updated within the limits of early twentieth-century technology, delayed only by regulation of the daily print cycle and the time of transmission of information from Europe via wireless to the associated press in America. Throughout October, readers of the *Sun* were kept remarkably informed of the war’s conduct and the continued *Entente* onslaught, as well as the political and diplomatic plans, despite the often-sensitive nature of the information. For example, despite active, ongoing hostilities, on October 18th, the *Sun* reported that Austria was to be dissected in

⁸⁹ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 44, Number 31, October 18, 1918.

⁹⁰ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 44, Number 30, October 6, 1918.

⁹¹ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 44, Number 39, October 17, 1918.

furtherance of Wilson's demands for self-determination.⁹² This demonstrated a significant degree of openness with the public regarding the government's plans, confidence in the newfound diplomatic clout of Woodrow Wilson and the Americans, and pride in American achievements in the war. This enthusiasm and pride is further reflected by the fact that by October 18th, the city and county of San Bernardino had both exceeded their liberty bond quotas, demonstrating continued local engagement and support of the war effort.⁹³

On October 19, 1918, the *Sun's* readers read about the disintegration of Austria-Hungary through stories about the Czech takeover of Prague, the resignation of ministers, and chaos in Hungary.⁹⁴ On October 20th, the *Sun* reported that the national liberty loan drive had exceeded its goals, demonstrating that national patriotic fervor and excitement were strong.⁹⁵ San Bernardino County exceeded its goal by \$500,000 (goal of \$2,739,050).⁹⁶ As news from the war made it increasingly obvious that the Central Powers were routed, the quantity of local patriotic "puff" pieces were reduced, to be replaced with success stories regarding the liberty loans or the war effort. It is likely that these often-frivolous stories became obsolete as events in Europe unfolded; implicitly the Germans were no longer a threat. However, although "puff" pieces were often replaced with genuine local news, stories regarding Russian communists began to appear, such as a story on October 22nd described the arrest in San Francisco of a Russian language teacher "on a charge of attempting to spread Bolsheviki propaganda, and an hour later was indicted by the United States grand jury."⁹⁷ The *Sun* had replaced the sensationalism of one perceived danger with another.

America's diplomatic clout was evident on October 24th,

⁹² San Bernardino Sun; Volume 44, Number 40, October 18, 1918.

⁹³ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 44, Number 40, October 18, 1918.

⁹⁴ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 44, Number 41, October 19, 1918.

⁹⁵ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 44, Number 42, October 20, 1918.

⁹⁶ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 44, Number 42, October 20, 1918.

⁹⁷ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 44, Number 43, October 22, 1918.

when the *Sun* printed an Associated Press story that President “WILSON PUTS ARMISTICE UP TO ALLIED NATIONS FOR DECISION.”⁹⁸ Following numerous stories about Wilson unilaterally rejecting both Austrian and German peace offers in the preceding weeks, Wilson, by placing the decision in the hands of the allied nations, enhanced his perceived reasonableness, leadership, *and* pre-eminence. Additionally, San Bernardino readers were still receiving news from within Germany itself, usually from neutral European go-betweens, such as an October 24th story about an explosion at a German munitions factory.⁹⁹

By October 26, 1918, peace was inevitable, and America’s united domestic political front was beginning to show signs of fracture. Wilson sought to parlay his war leadership into another majority for his Democratic party in both houses of Congress, in response to which the *Sun* printed a rebuke of the president.¹⁰⁰ Additionally, San Bernardinans began reading about new American military commitments, including an expedition to Vladivostok in support of the White Russians in their civil war against the Bolsheviks.¹⁰¹ Anti-Bolshevik news stories continued to be printed, positioning the Bolsheviks as America’s new enemy because the Central Powers were on the verge of defeat. The *Sun* printed stories intended to generate public support for intervention in Russia, such as one particularly lurid piece provided by the British wireless service about “Russian maidens under the jurisdiction of certain provincial Bolsheviks become the “property of the state,” when they reach the age of 18 years and are compelled to register at a government “bureau of free love.”¹⁰²

⁹⁸ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 44, Number 45, October 22, 1918.

⁹⁹ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 44, Number 45, October 22, 1918; additionally, although the war and the ongoing diplomatic posturing absorbed the vast majority of the *Sun*’s editorial space, other stories of great global significance were nevertheless being reported, including the rapidly escalating flu pandemic, with the *Sun* reporting that there were “866 deaths in a week in Paris from influenza.”

¹⁰⁰ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 44, Number 47, October 26, 1918.

¹⁰¹ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 44, Number 47, October 26, 1918.

¹⁰² San Bernardino Sun; Volume 44, Number 47, October 26, 1918.

On October 27, 1918, the *Sun* reported that General Ludendorff had resigned.¹⁰³ On October 30th, San Bernardinans read that the final terms demanding an armistice were agreed upon by *Entente* political leaders at Versailles.¹⁰⁴ On October 31st, the *Sun* reported that Kaiser Wilhelm was willing to resign and that Austria was seeking a separate peace.¹⁰⁵ On November 1st, San Bernardino woke to the news that the Ottomans had surrendered.¹⁰⁶ The situation in Europe was extremely fluid and unstable. Within a day of events, the *San Bernardino Sun* was accurately reporting to its readers. On November 5th, the *Sun* reported that armistice terms were signed with Germany in Paris.¹⁰⁷ Domestic politics dominated the news on November 6th, as, despite Wilson's war prestige, the Republicans took control of the House of Representatives and gained three seats in the Senate.¹⁰⁸ Despite continuing hostilities, the *Sun's* stories thereafter increasingly focused on domestic news or the anticipated peace, with Germany's surrender viewed as a certainty. As the *Entente* waited for the formal response from Germany to the armistice terms, *Entente* forces continued to advance against fractured German resistance.¹⁰⁹ On November 12th, the *Sun* finally reported the end of the First World War to the people of San Bernardino.¹¹⁰

Conclusion

This paper analyzed the *San Bernardino Sun's* reporting during four very distinct phases of the war; (1) America's entry; (2) the uncertainty and danger of Germany's Operation *Michael*, which saw *Entente* armies stressed to the breaking point; (3) the

¹⁰³ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 44, Number 48, October 27, 1918.

¹⁰⁴ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 44, Number 50, October 30, 1918.

¹⁰⁵ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 44, Number 51, October 31, 1918.

¹⁰⁶ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 44, Number 52, November 1, 1918.

¹⁰⁷ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 44, Number 53, November 5, 1918.

¹⁰⁸ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 44, Number 56, November 6, 1918.

¹⁰⁹ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 44, Number 58, November 8, 1918.

¹¹⁰ San Bernardino Sun; Volume 44, Number 61, November 12, 1918.

successful defense of the Marne; and (4) the final, brutal campaign that ended the war. There are a number of conclusions that can be drawn from the stories published by the *Sun* during these periods.

First, the people of San Bernardino were well informed of events in Europe and their political and domestic repercussions in America. The news was wired to America and disseminated to newspapers through the Associated Press with a delay in delivery of only one day, which is consistent with the daily print/publication cycle of a newspaper. Longer delays only seem to occur on specific days (like Mondays) when the *Sun* did not go to print. Further, in addition to stories from American newsmen, the *Sun* published its own local interest news and had access (through the Associated Press) to stories from neutral countries like Denmark and Switzerland, information releases from the German foreign office, and the British wireless service. The variety, veracity, and scope of the news available to San Bernardinans were, therefore, substantial and remarkable.

Second, the news printed by the *Sun* was factually accurate. News from Europe included strategic and tactical details of engagements, information on new technology and weapons, prisoners captured by both sides, casualties, and territory both lost and gained. In other words, San Bernardinans were informed of both *good news* and *bad news* from the war.¹¹¹ Access to alternative sources like the German foreign office or neutral press agencies enhanced the quality, scope, and accuracy of the information available to the *Sun*'s readers.

Third, the *Sun*'s local interest pieces, though often of dubious informational value, demonstrated the high degree of interest in the war within San Bernardino County. As the largest newspaper in the county, the *Sun* was the primary source of information for many of the citizens of San Bernardino. The stories chosen and printed by the *Sun* were ultimately a reflection of both public opinion (albeit through the influential mind of the editors)

¹¹¹ Once again, this is practical evidence of George Creel and the CPI's policy of providing balanced news to the American public.

and public interest. The *Sun*, as a for-profit paper, had a natural self-interest in printing what it believed its readers *wanted* to read (to sell copies) and also in what it believed its readers *needed* to read (genuine news of international importance). Thus, the *Sun*'s local interest stories reflect genuine feelings of excitement, fear, paranoia, and patriotism within the community, whether through irrational stories of German agents or pride in the county's liberty loan contributions, San Bernardinans were actively engaged in the war and its progress on the home front.

Fourth, the information available to the *Sun* and its readers was voluminous and detailed. The *Sun*, its readers, and the Associated Press had their pulse on the conduct of the war and the ability to modify the type of stories published accordingly. For example, as the Meuse-Argonne offensive turned into a route for German forces and increasingly signaled the end of the war, the *Sun* published different types of stories, reducing the number of local anti-German pieces and replacing them with anti-Bolshevik stories, changing the news focus from military stories to diplomatic stories is another. The *Sun*'s reporting was thus flexible and kept abreast of current events.

Other than the medium of transmission, the people of 1917-18 San Bernardino received a quality of hard, informational news during the First World War that would rival modern news organizations. Although one could argue that the patriotic "puff" pieces and local interest pieces are nothing more than the meaningless social news of their time, the sheer volume of accurate and timely information presented to the *Sun*'s readers was remarkable. These same readers were active, engaged, and one can presume that as a result of the *Sun*'s work, informed.

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Author Bio

Jeff LeBlanc was born in the Canadian town of Atikokan to a mining family. His family settled along the north shore of Lake Superior, where he worked as a lifeguard and heavy equipment operator to pay for college. Jeff graduated with distinction from the University of Toronto majoring in history and classical civilizations in 2002. Jeff taught high school English in Japan and spent a year backpacking through Australia and New Zealand, before graduating from the University of La Verne law school. Jeff graduated *magna cum laude* and second in his class. He was a member of the law review editorial board member and published five times. He has been a practicing litigation and appellate attorney in Upland, California, since 2007, and in 2014 became a partner at Anderson & LeBlanc. Jeff always wanted to complete his M.A. in history and, in 2018, started an online program through the University of Nebraska at Kearney as a “hobby.” Jeff has been married to the amazingly awesome Cassi since 2007 and has four fur babies: Squeeky, Luna, Carson, and Thor. Jeff splits time between Rancho Cucamonga and Big Bear. He is an avid soccer player, martial artist, mountain biker, writer, reader, skier, craft beer drinker, traveler, and proud Rotarian.



Reproductive Justice and the Black Panther Party

By Dakota Mancuso

Abstract: Despite the multitude of research available on the Black Panther Party (BPP), the group's widespread social activism programs and their positive effect on the health of communities, is generally understated. These programs, known by the party as "survival programs," provided a plethora of services meant to increase the standards of living of underserved people, all at no cost. Such programs included a series of People's Free Medical Clinics, Free Breakfast for Children programs, and several Liberation Schools, including the widely successful Oakland Community School. When looking at these programs within the context of reproductive justice, or the framework of study which holds that people have an inherent right to reproduce, to not reproduce, and to raise children in environments suitable for families, the BPP's contribution to the said field is undeniable. As such, "The Black Panther Party and Reproductive Justice" seeks to uncover the deep connection between the BPP and the notion of reproductive justice, positing that the party through the creation of its numerous survival programs, acted as an early vanguard of reproductive justice before it was fully conceptualized.

Introduction

While reproductive justice as a theory has only recently begun to emerge as a popular framework in the field of social justice, it has quickly become useful in reassessing some of the most complex debates regarding the African American struggle for civil rights. Reproductive justice is broadly defined as the right to reproduce, to not reproduce, and the access to safe environments to raise families

in. This framework of study has grown to encompass a wide range of topics, from birth control and fertility access to issues of gender and sexuality, since its original coining by black feminists in 1994.¹ The intersectional nature of reproductive justice, or its ability to address overlapping facets of marginalization affecting communities, has led many historians to reexamine the reputation and nature of leading Black Power and Black Liberation groups. The most notable of these to be studied within the context of their contributions to reproductive justice is the Black Panther Party (or BPP). Such research has shown that the BPP was largely formed around, and arguably guided by the notion of reproductive justice, even before the term was fully conceptualized.

To draw conclusions on whether the BPP can be considered an early vanguard of reproductive justice, this paper will seek to illuminate the current scholarship on the BPP and its unique relationship with reproductive justice as well as the social activism associated with it. What will be revealed is that while the BPP's memory has been long overshadowed by the party's vigilante public persona, modern academia has made great strides in revealing the group's long-overlooked legacy of activism in health, education, and food access.

The Black Panther Party in Academia

When looking at how the Black Panther Party, or BPP, has been remembered by scholars of history, it is necessary to consider discourses that have already been put forth regarding the party. One such work that gives insight into the ways that the party has been framed by academics, is historian Joe Street's article for the *Journal of American Studies*, "The Historiography of the Black Panther Party and the Struggle for Human Rights." According to Street, academic arguments on the party can generally be grouped into three broad categories of study. These categories came about

¹ Meghan Daniel, "The Social Movement for Reproductive Justice: Emergence, Intersectional Strategies, and Theory Building," *Sociology Compass* 15, no. 8 (June 2021): 8.

chronologically and were centered around particular facets of the BPP's memory. The first body of study is described by Street as especially surface-level, and only contributing to a commonly referenced neutral overview of the party. Such studies focused on stories of the party's membership, paying little attention to its influence beyond the experience of individuals in the party.

The second phase of study is characterized by the release of many popular biographical studies of the party's head and co-founder, Huey Newton (1949-1989). These biographies focused particularly on the impact of Newton's leadership role in the party. Of its two founders, Huey Newton and Bobby Seale (b.1936), Newton has largely been seen as the more controversial of the two. As a result, Street makes a point that Newton's biographies have generated much debate in scholarly circles, having injected discussions on how Newton's persona affected the group from the top-down. Historian Hugh Pearson's biography of Newton, called *Shadow of The Panther: Huey Newton and The Price of Black Power in America*, is cited as one the most influential writings of this phase. This biography, Street claims, was heavily critical of the pitfalls of the enigmatic leader Newton and was so particularly negative towards the party in general, that it set off a third phase of authorship.

This final contemporary phase sought to develop a more nuanced understanding of the group as being more than just a product of its individual members, or its leadership. Rather, it highlights the BPP's involvement in African American history and culture in a way which looks past its vigilante public persona created by many of its leading members. Street terms these third phase BPP scholars as "empiricist-activists," who he concludes emerged out of the over-wrought narratives and harsh critiques of Pearson's 1994 biography to offer a more well-rounded understanding of the BPP. Such empiricist-activist scholars have placed the Black Panther Party's public health programs at the forefront of their discussion, looking deeply at the impact that the party's free medical clinics, community schools, and breakfast

programs had on the shaping of the party, and on the future of public health.²

Unfortunately, while this contemporary conversation has led to a plethora of new research and perspectives being formed on the party, many historians today still debate whether a concise discourse on the party's legacy has yet been had. Consequently, modern BPP empiricist-activist writers, Joshua Bloom and Waldo Martin, tackle this debate in their book, *Black Against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party*. In it they argue that Panther scholarship in the last twenty or so years has lacked a research-backed synthesis of all the party's various aspects at once, due largely to historians' tendencies to simplify the party to its members, armed resistance, and confrontations with police. Thus, in order for a true understanding of the party to be gathered, the two hold that one must examine the party's membership, their politics, and their actions as wholly interrelated, rather than separate.³ As a result, to truly answer the question of whether or not the BPP has had a legacy of reproductive justice, we must look at the actual nature of the party's inception itself, and the very programs and pieces of ideology that the party created and disseminated. Therefore, it is important to consider the connections drawn by historian Jessica Harris between the socio-political atmosphere which the Panthers rose up in, and their desire to reform public health accessibility to create a safer environment for both parents and children.

In her article "Revolutionary Black Nationalism: The Black Panther Party," she draws parallels between the mantra of black nationalism, and the rise of the BPP as an organization. Her argument holds that the concept and the party acted as interrelated socio-political phenomena, which not only gave birth to the revolutionary nature of the BPP but led it to be inextricably linked

² Joe Street, "The Historiography of the Black Panther Party," *Journal of American Studies* 44, no. 2 (July 2010): 353.

³ Joshua Bloom and Waldo Martin, *Black Against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2012), 4-5.

to the tenets of reproductive justice. Harris notes that after a period known as Classical Black Nationalism, which began in the early nineteenth century and continued into the Depression (1929-1939), a new wave of African American activism began to coalesce in response to the Civil Rights Movement's (1954-1968) nonviolent ideology. This new wave of thought precipitated the creation of many activist groups and was heavily influenced by the notion of black nationalism, or "the recognition of the need for cultural and racial solidarity," as Harris defines it.⁴ These groups ranged from educational nationalists who wished to create black-serving schools and universities, to revolutionary nationalists who sought a complete political upheaval by the oppressed against a perceived oppressor. The Black Panther Party, a group that sought to completely reform the federal government based on that government's perceived tyranny, is placed firmly by Harris in the revolutionary nationalist category.⁵ With this in mind, all the BPP's actions, and even their public appearance, should be examined in the context of their desire to reform the existing government to protect marginalized communities from state violence.

Scholars like historian Amy Ongiri, in her book on black nationalism and the Black Power movement, titled *Spectacular Blackness: The Cultural Politics of the Black Power Movement and the Search for a Black Aesthetic*, offers a strong explanation and context to the party's aggressive-style uniforms and revolutionary nature. She argues that such costuming was a reaction to contemporary armed movements like those of Che Guevara (1928-1967) and the Cuban Revolution (1953-1959). Furthermore, Ongiri notes that such international revolutionary groups heavily influenced the party, and widely espoused the idea that armed propaganda, even if used by a small group, could be an effective tool to incite the masses into a war of the people set

⁴ Jessica C. Harris, "Revolutionary Black Nationalism: The Black Panther Party," *The Journal of African American History* 85, no. 3 (Summer 2000): 162.

⁵ Harris, "Revolutionary Black Nationalism: The Black Panther Party," 164.

against civil wrongs.⁶ In noting this, Ongiri goes against the common misconception that the Black Panther Party's appearance was somehow proof of them being a domestic terrorist group and instead directs the conversation to answer the deeper question of why the Panthers carried themselves as they did. Granted, the party's appearance was one that was intentionally aggressive and eye-catching, as the Panthers often gathered in matching leather jackets, sporting brown berets, and wielding large weapons openly. The "Seattle Black Panther Party History and Memory Project," which was compiled by the University of Washington, offers several strong images of this aggressive appearance. One such photo is included below in Figure 1, which depicts members of the Seattle chapter of the Black Panther Party, as they protested a bill that sought to make the open exhibition of guns in public "in an intimidating manner" completely illegal.⁷

⁶ Amy Abugo Ongiri, *Spectacular Blackness: The Cultural Politics of the Black Power Movement and the Search for a Black Aesthetic* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009), 33.

⁷ The Civil Rights and Labor History Consortium, "Seattle Black Panther Party History and Memory Project," Washington State Archives, accessed December 9, 2022.



Figure 1. An example of the Black Panther Party's use of "political theater" in a demonstration outside of the capitol building in Olympia, Washington on February 28th, 1969. Courtesy of the Washington State Archives.⁸

Ongiri helps to give logical reasoning behind such displays as the one above, by arguing that the party's ideological push for the protection of the black community, and later the wider marginalized community, were acts of political theater meant to highlight the changes that needed to be made. Therefore, both the party's health activism and their open carrying of arms, were meant to publicly show their resistance to the institutionalized racism that African American people faced in the United States.⁹ As such, many reproductive justice scholars today have theorized

⁸ Washington State Archives.

http://depts.washington.edu/labpics/zenPhoto/BPP/wsa/black_20panthers_202-28-69.jpg.

⁹ Amy Abugo Ongiri, *Spectacular Blackness: The Cultural Politics of the Black Power Movement and the Search for a Black Aesthetic* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009), 44.

on how institutionalized racism affected African American reproductive rights and overall human dignity, by depriving them of access to community-based resources like healthcare, food, and education.¹⁰ Since access to all these resources lie at the heart of reproductive justice and are necessary to make parenting possible, scholars have firmly proven that the BPP had an active hand in upholding reproductive justice by highlighting and stepping in to fill the deficits in their communities. Ultimately the party's solutions to these inequalities would develop out of their self-defense programs and political theater, later turning into their community outreach or "survival" programs.

In his book *Up Against the Wall: Violence in the Making and the Unmaking of the Black Panther Party*, Curtis Austin discusses these community service-based survival programs with scrutiny. Austin argues that the Panthers were, from beginning to end, influenced by violent rhetoric, both as it had been used against African Americans, and by African American nationalist leaders in their responses to unequal treatment under the law. This constant atmosphere of violence he notes, coupled with the failure of authorities to act in their defense, led African Americans to have few choices but to organize and defend themselves publicly in groups like the Panthers.¹¹ Austin also draws a clear connection between party co-founder Huey Newton's first public stand-off with police and the beginning of the party's tradition of open resistance to state institutions. Furthermore, he marks it as the root cause of their rapid growth and equally rapid decline. Looking at the way that the stand-off went down, the threat of racial profiling by police against African Americans becomes evident.

The stand-off which took place in 1967 during the early days of the Panther organization, was a result of multiple Panthers, including Huey Newton, openly carrying weapons outside their

¹⁰ Loretta Ross and Rickie Solinger, *Reproductive Justice, an Introduction* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017), 9.

¹¹ Curtis Austin, *Up Against the Wall: Violence in the Making and the Unmaking of the Black Panther Party* (Fayetteville: The University of Arkansas Press, 2008), 24.

office and into a car. Austin notes that this was well within the bounds of their second-amendment rights at the time, however, this was of little importance to the authorities. While driving away, the men were targeted and confronted by a police squad car which quickly pulled them over. The scene as Austin describes it, was another example of political theater, with police attempting to illegally confiscate the Panthers' weapons, and Huey Newton verbally resisting the seizure. He dramatically cited his rights under the law, all the while holding his gun defiantly. Newton called to the crowd that was forming around him to observe the injustices taking place, but before the situation escalated further, the police retreated, knowing they had nothing to charge the men with.¹² This event would become huge news in the community, and show the people that Huey Newton and the Panthers were willing and able to use their knowledge of the law and their constitutional rights, to aid them in their fight against repression. The success of this confrontation thrust the Panthers, and Huey Newton especially, into the limelight as being openly opposed to police brutality, and other systemic issues which riddled inner-city communities. Such sudden fame allowed Newton to build a platform for followers interested in what he and his party had to say. This gave him a unique opportunity to fight injustice with a pen, just as much as he did with a gun.

As a result, it is important to also give attention to Huey Newton and his many literary works which sought to outline his and his party's motives. In Newton's autobiography, *Revolutionary Suicide*, he describes in detail his upbringing, and how he came to be the founder of the Black Panther Party, illustrating for readers a life influenced heavily by the negative race relations present in his community. In the autobiography, Newton says that he chose the Panther as the symbolic mascot of the BPP based not only on its overtly fierce nature, but the notion that a panther would only attack if it was backed into a corner.¹³ Knowing this, it is hard to

¹² Austin, *Up Against the Wall*, 57.

¹³ Huey P. Newton, *Revolutionary Suicide* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973), 113.

conceptualize the BPP as anything but a response to the conditions that were present at the time.

Thus, other conditions like the slew of communist revolutions that took place during the 1960s, and the underlying Cold War (1947-1991), all certainly influenced the development of the party, and how it was received by the public. In his own memoir of the Black Panther Party, *War Against the Panthers: A Study of Repression in America*, which was finally published in September of 2000, years after his death in 1989, Newton recognized that the party was different from other black nationalists at the time for one leading reason. He states that the party sought to embody socialism, which Newton called “inter-communalism,” as it was espoused by international revolutionaries. He notes that it was this adherence to inter-communalism which not only differentiated the party from other groups, but also caused the BPP to face off so heavily against the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) due to Cold War fears of communism.¹⁴ Ultimately, it was what gave them the reason and ability as a party, to expand their activities from armed self-defense to social activism via their survival programs. As a result, the BPP’s socialist leanings motivated them to replace poorly functioning government services, whether they be law enforcement or health care, with free programs led by “the people” instead. It becomes clear then, that the BPP had a deep-rooted ideology that was heavily related to the protection of the overall well-being of the community, and that this ideology was one that was spread top to bottom from its leadership to its members.

The Black Panther Survival Programs

Huey Newton’s use of law and social action to stand up to inequities represented an early realization that while armed revolution was unlikely, political change was still necessary. As

¹⁴ Huey P. Newton, *War Against the Panthers: A Study of Repression in America* (Santa Cruz: University of Santa Cruz, 1980), 17.

such, Newton found it important to create programs that would deal with problems facing the community *today* pending the actual full armed revolution of *tomorrow*. His party did this by providing for the immediate material needs of the African American community and by raising their political consciousness.¹⁵ Paul Alkebulan argues in his book *Survival Pending Revolution: The History of the Black Panther Party*, that this emphasis on taking immediate action would cause the party to shift its means of protecting the community from brandishing weapons, to protecting it via providing accessible public health.

Deemed “survival programs,” because they were specifically centered around helping community members survive the constant threat of institutionalized racism, such initiatives are seen today as what allowed the party to confront the resource insecurities facing minorities for generations. According to Alkebulan, the party’s many community action programs also embodied one of the party’s underpinning ideologies, one of which was publicly espoused by Huey Newton in his essay titled “The Black Panthers.” There, Newton is quoted as saying that in the view of the BPP, the “American government and its institutions are illegitimate and have no right to exist, because they failed to meet the needs of the whole population.”¹⁶ This statement, more than anything, should be indicative of the party’s survival programs being sources of reproductive justice activism. This is because it is a clear example of the party stating their intentions to use their own survival programs to replace institutional ones which they considered as preventing African Americans from leading safe and healthy lifestyles. To observe how the programs are detailed, and how their ideology was codified, one should look at the BPP’s newspaper, the *Black Panther Intercommunal News Service*, and their ideological mantra, the Ten-Point Program. These publications are seen by BPP scholars as vector points from which the party spread information among its party membership and

¹⁵ Huey P. Newton, “The Black Panthers,” *Ebony Magazine* (Chicago: August 1969), 106–12.

¹⁶ Newton, “The Black Panthers,” 29.

community, as well as powerful indicators of the motives behind the party's activities.

Black Panther scholars like Roman Meredith, note that in publications of the *Black Panther Intercommunal News Service*, "The Panthers defined human rights primarily in terms of social and economic rights, and endeavored to give acknowledgment to the gross disparities in living conditions, education, health care, and employment that the US civil rights movement had left largely untouched."¹⁷ This is supported in turn by scholar Garret Broad who notes that this attention to human rights is codified in their Ten-Point Program that listed "land, bread, housing, education, clothing, justice, and peace, and an end to police brutality," as just some of the leading demands of the party.¹⁸ Their adherence to such community-focused ideals in their Ten-Point Program, and the personification of matching ideology in their survival programs, offer strong evidence for the party's championing of reproductive justice.

The party's survival programs are referenced specifically in a 1973 issue of the *Black Panther Intercommunal News Service*, where the programs are introduced in a long-annotated list that showed their official names and briefs on their declared functions. The programs listed vary from the more well-known People's Free Medical Clinics and Free Breakfast Program to lesser-known programs such as the Free Pest Control Program and the Intercommunal Youth Institute. According to each program's note, these operations were described as intending to provide an array of services to those in need, from offering shoes and employment via the David Hilliard Free Shoe Program and the People's Free Community Employment Program to providing

¹⁷ Meredith Roman, "The Black Panther Party and the Struggle for Human Rights," *Spectrum: A Journal on Black Men* 5, no. 1 (September 2016): 8.

¹⁸ Garrett M. Broad, *More Than Just Food: Food Justice and Community Change* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016), 132.

transportation/escort services to the elderly, via the Seniors Against Fearful Environments (S.A.F.E) Program.¹⁹

With each program addressing a different and yet equally necessary part of healthy living, the survival programs were clearly a strong push by the Black Panther Party to support early conceptions of reproductive justice. Therefore, by examining the survival programs firsthand, invaluable insight is gained into how the party used these programs to champion health activism. Since they are arguably some of the most well-remembered and influential of their “survival programs,” the following sections will focus primarily on the People’s Free Medical Clinics, the Oakland Community Schools, and the Free Breakfast Programs.

People’s Free Medical Clinics

The first of the Black Panther Party’s People’s Free Medical Clinics (or PFMCS) were formed in 1968 by chapters in Kansas City, Seattle, and Chicago. They were meant to act as more effective and accessible alternatives to Medicare and Medicaid, as well as President Lyndon B. Johnson’s (1908-1973) Great Society community health centers.²⁰ While groundbreaking, these clinics were not alone, but rather, were a part of a wave of social changes that were taking place in the context of the Vietnam War. This response was characterized by an African American push to create publicly funded clinics as alternatives to often segregated government healthcare programs. Today free medical clinics are rather numerous nationwide, with the present number standing at about 1,200 across the United States.²¹

¹⁹ The Black Panther Party, “The Black Panther: Intercommunal News Service,” *The Black Panther* 10, no. 11, July 1973, 17, https://files.libcom.org/files/July_28_1973_Vol10_No11_2.pdf.

²⁰ Diane Pien, “Black Panther Party’s Free Medical Clinics (1969-1975),” <https://www.blackpast.org/>, accessed December 9, 2022.

²¹ Herbert Y. Reynolds, “Free Medical Clinics: Helping Indigent Patients and Dealing with Emerging Health Care Needs,” *Academic Medicine* 84, no. 10 (October 2009): 1434.

Like other free clinics throughout the country, the BPP's PFMCs were staffed by teams of professional volunteers, whose expertise included obstetrics, and gynecology, as well as the little-studied field of Sickle Cell Anemia screening.²² In addition, such clinics also advocated for open discussion on black social relations, including gendered relations between black males and females, and the complexities of challenges facing black youth.²³ These are significant facts, as the creation of such health and social services are all strong indicators of the Panthers' intentions to produce safe environments for young people to grow in, and to ultimately be secure enough to raise their own families.

Many former Panthers have written on the topic of the People's Free Medical Clinics, however, the personal experience of Quentin Young (1923-2016) during his work within the BPP's Chicago-based PFMC, sheds a more intimate light on the story of the party's free clinics. Writing in *Everybody In, Nobody Out: Memoirs of a Rebel Without a Pause*, which was published in 2013, Young details his time as a Panther member working alongside volunteers in the Spurgeon 'Jake' Winters clinic - which like other PFMCs was so-named for a martyred Panther killed by police. His account is powerful in its recollection of the nature of volunteers at the clinic, noting that they were "skilled and dedicated young lions and lionesses who simply liked the idea of organic unity with their patients, and who could treat upwards of twenty to thirty patients daily."²⁴ Young's description of the clinic and its staff emphasize an atmosphere of service, professionalism,

²² Mary T. Bassett, "No Justice, No Health: The Black Panther Party's Fight for Health in Boston and Beyond," *Journal of African American Studies* 23, no. 4 (November 2019): 357; Mary T. Bassett, "Beyond Berets: The Black Panthers as Health Activists." *American Journal of Public Health* 106, no. 10 (September 2016): 1741.

²³ Joshua Bloom and Waldo E. Martin, *Black against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2013), 188.

²⁴ Quentin Young, "Quentin Young on the Black Panther Party Free Clinic in Chicago," *American Journal of Public Health* 106, no. 10 (October 2016): 118.

and exceptional teamwork which made maintaining the health and respect of community members their highest priority.

Other scholars who have written extensively on the Black Panther Party and their People's Free Medical Clinics, in particular, are historians Alondra Nelson and Mary T. Bassett. Bassett, in her article, "Beyond Berets: The Black Panthers as Health Activists," describes her experience in getting to volunteer as a medical worker in the Black Panther Party's Franklin Lynch People's Free Health Center. Much like the testimonies of Quentin Young, Bassett's writing offers a powerful and intimate look into the inner workings of the party's free medical clinics. In her article, Bassett describes how she came to join the Black Panther Party as a medical volunteer in the 1970s, after being interested in the way that the party was directly countering systemic poverty and violence. While there, she served as the leader of part of the first Sickle-Cell Anemia screening programs in the clinic, which she notes the Black Panther Party started after learning that sickle-cell anemia was a neglected genetic disease based on the fact that it presented itself most often in African Americans.²⁵ In the article Bassett even includes an image of one such PFMC that serves as a strong visual of just how small these operations were, especially considering the revolutionary effects that these clinics had. The image, which is shown below in Figure 2, depicts the clinic as a small, ramshackle trailer, which looks rather unassuming on the outside.

²⁵ Mary T. Bassett, "Beyond Berets: The Black Panthers as Health Activists," *American Journal of Public Health* 106, no. 10 (September 2016), 1742-1743.



Figure 2. A BPP flier commemorating the opening of the Bobby Seale People's Free Medical Clinic in the city of Berkeley, California, circa April 1971. As depicted in Mary T. Bassett's article "Beyond Berets: The Black Panthers as Health Activists." Courtesy of It's About Time Black Panther Archive.²⁶

Knowing that such People's Free Medical Clinics were small, self-staffed, and self-funded operations, and yet had a large impact, is what arguably has led modern researchers to home in on the topic. Alondra Nelson in her text *Body and Soul: The Black Panther Party and the Fight against Medical Discrimination*, strives to dig deeper into the legacy of the party's PFMCs, and their roles as "patient advocate" centers. In an interview with writer Denise Hawkins where Nelson is questioned about the extent of the PFMC's services, Nelson notes that the clinics acted

²⁶ It's About Time Black Panther Archive, http://www.itsabouttimebpp.com/index_PhotoGallery.html.

as places where patients could have several facets of their well-being attended to, “from getting their blood pressure checked to getting help in dealing with pests at home, or even landlords who were giving them a hard time.”²⁷ Understanding that the presence of such problems in households made it so that maintaining a family became unsustainable, underlines the broad nature of reproductive justice as being more than access to food and water. Rather, reproductive justice is a term that has come to encompass access to dignified spaces where both parents and children can flourish. This level of community engagement and its effects are something that is often overlooked when considering the Black Panther Party. When the group’s actions are looked at more deeply within such a context, however, it is clear that the BPP sought to make reproductive justice more accessible to communities that otherwise lacked it. This push by the Panthers to feed and care for the health of the people in their cities through programs like the PFMCS, cannot be ignored as a conscious drive toward this end. This is especially true when one realizes that the party’s survival programs became one of the fundamental requirements for chapters being brought into the fold.

According to Nelson, BPP co-founder Bobby Seale released a directive to the party in 1970 which said that “community service work of all Party chapters should minimally consist of a Free Breakfast for Children Program, and a health clinic.”²⁸ In calling for such programs to be present in all party chapters at a base level, Seale’s directive further supports the argument that health activism, in the form of tackling reproductive injustice through their survival programs, was not just an

²⁷ Alondra Nelson, “Black Panthers: Activists for Healthy Communities,” interview by Denise Hawkins, *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*, April 26, 2012, 6, <http://libproxy.lib.csusb.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.libproxy.lib.csusb.edu/magazines/black-panthers-activists-healthy-communities/docview/1010819527/se-2>.

²⁸ Alondra Nelson, *Body and Soul: The Black Panther Party and the Fight Against Medical Discrimination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 90.

afterthought of the BPP. Rather, it was a top-down pillar of their ideology. The openings of such clinics were widely circulated among BPP members in their newspaper as a sort of rallying cry for change. Such programs also served to empower the African American communities affected by them by creating a sense that African Americans had an active hand in their own progress and were not simply reliant on the U.S. government which chose to treat them as second-class citizens. These ideas of the party's survival programs being made by African Americans, for African Americans, are personified in one of the party's many hand-outs given in meetings. An image of one of these pamphlets was included by Alondra Nelson in her book. The image, which is shown in Figure 3, depicts an African American medical professional tending to an African American child in one of the party's People's Free Medical Clinics.

THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY
ANNOUNCES.....
THE GRAND OPENING OF



**THE BOBBY SEALE
PEOPLE'S
FREE
HEALTH CLINIC**

**SATURDAY
APRIL 24th 1971
2:00 P.M.**

3236 Adeline St. Berkeley

A persons' health is their most valuable possession. Improper health care and inadequate facilities can be used to perpetrate genocide on a people. The present fascist, racist government used its facilities for that purpose -- the genocide of poor and oppressed people. The people must create institutions within our communities that are controlled and run by the people in order to insure our survival. With this in mind, the Black Panther Party announces the opening of our first Free Health Clinic in the Bay Area.

ALSO.....FREE FOOD & CLOTHING ON OPENING DAY

For further information contact
Black Panther Party...Berkeley Branch
2230 10th St. Berkeley...Phone 848-7740

Figure 3. Boston's Franklin Lynch PFMC, as depicted on page 91 of *Body and Soul: The Black Panther Party and the Fight Against Medical Discrimination*, by Alondra Nelson. Courtesy of It's About Time Black Panther Archive²⁹

²⁹ It's About Time Black Panther Archive.

At the bottom, the hand-out reads:

A persons' health is their most valuable possession. Improper health care and inadequate facilities can be used to perpetrate genocide on a people. The present fascist, racist government used its facilities for that purpose – the genocide of poor and oppressed people. The people must create institutions within our communities that are controlled and run by the people in order to insure [sic] our survival. With this in mind, the Black Panther Party announces the opening of our first Free Health Clinic in the Bay Area. ALSO...FREE FOOD & CLOTHING ON OPENING DAY.³⁰

By including this flier in her book, Nelson, like other Panther scholars, such as Alkebulan and Ongiri, makes the argument that the party's survival programs represented a definitive reaction to state negligence and state violence against marginalized communities. This claim is further strengthened by the fact that the party was not only reacting to medical discrimination but was acting against educational and economic disparities as well. This push towards socio-political equality is further illuminated by the party's creation of their own education programs, known as Liberation Schools.

Liberation Schools and the Oakland Community School

As the party leadership realized the value of social change made possible by their survival programs, they turned to educating the community through Liberation Schools, the first of which was founded in 1969. These liberation schools, which began as places to promote African American heritage and Black Panther ideology, eventually became a model for the Panthers' most successful

³⁰ Nelson, *Body and Soul*, 91.

instructional endeavor: the Oakland Community School, or OCS for short.³¹ The Oakland Community School, which provided students with three meals a day, a well-rounded curriculum, and even qualified for state funding, would become well-known for its achievements.³²

The OCS, which is described in detail by Alkebulan in *Survival Pending Revolution*, offered quality private school education, referrals for preventative healthcare, accessible bussing, and even three meals a day, all the while not charging any tuition. To Alkebulan, by giving these children free food and free learning, the BPP was not only making education more accessible to minority groups who were poorly served by the American government, but were also instilling a much-needed sense of self-worth in children's lives.³³ It would go on to be admired publicly by then California Governor Jerry Brown (1905-1996), who said it had "set the highest level of elementary education in the state."³⁴ Alkebulan notes that "the State Department of Education also cited the OCS as offering one of the most important models for elementary children in the inner city."³⁵ What is powerful about this is the way that the Panthers were consciously giving attention to not only the physical, but intellectual needs of their community's children. By doing this, they were creating places for marginalized students to have a safe space to learn without fear of racial provocation, which was something they often were otherwise denied. The need for a safe space to protect youth against racial violence, which was not being readily addressed by the state, is worth noting. This is because the BPP's survival programs would, unfortunately, go on to become targets for police harassment and bigotry, even though they were intended only for the betterment of the community.

³¹ Paul Alkebulan, *Survival Pending Revolution: The History of the Black Panther Party* (University of Alabama Press, 2007), 33-34.

³² Alkebulan, *Survival Pending Revolution*, 33-34.

³³ Alkebulan, *Survival Pending Revolution*, 34.

³⁴ Alkebulan, *Survival Pending Revolution*, 34.

³⁵ Alkebulan, *Survival Pending Revolution*, 35.

Free Breakfast Program

Scholars Bloom and Martin have been leaders in analyzing the many attacks on the party's survival programs, and most specifically their Free Breakfast for Children programs. Their work has illuminated the existence of police raids against the party's survival programs and proved that the black community had good reason for establishing their own institutions. In their book chapter, titled "Breakfast," in their work *Black Against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party*, Bloom, and Martin note that for the Panthers, "attacking the serious problem of childhood hunger was a way to win people's hearts and minds."³⁶ Unfortunately, however, the FBI and police also saw this community outreach strategy as something different. To many government officials, especially those in the city of Baltimore, the programs were seen "as a front for indoctrinating children with Black Panther propaganda." This would, unfortunately, result in a series of smear campaigns against the party and their programs, and would even lead to unfounded police raids of the programs' premises while children were present. Bloom and Martin note that this was especially damaging in the case of the Baltimore BPP chapter, which faced "an excessive amount of violent repression," that would leave "children feeling terrorized by police who would enter with guns drawn."³⁷ Such unjust actions taken by police against the free breakfast programs were well-recorded by the party in the *Black Panther Intercommunal News Service*.

For example, in the first edition of the third volume of the party's news service, there was a story titled "DES MOINES BREAKFAST FOR CHILDREN RALLY ATTACKED BY PIGS," which demonstrated just how determined police were to dismantle the party. In the column, the author of the story notes

³⁶ Joshua Bloom and Waldo E. Martin. *Black against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party*. (Oakland: University of California Press, 2013), 186.

³⁷ Bloom, *Black against Empire*, 186.

that the “pig power structure [did] not want the ‘Free Breakfast Program’ to go on because [said] program exposes the system for what it really is.”³⁸ Recorded incidents like the one above make clear the fact that these programs were making headway in socio-political change for the marginalized community in areas where the government was not. When the party sought to firmly take up the cause of reproductive justice with their own hands in this way, it became clear that it was an open breach of the status quo. This was something that the government could not allow, as it highlighted their own shortcomings. The BPP’s survival programs represented a threat to the long-standing paradigm which had allowed the federal government to exact its oppression on minorities without regard. Ultimately, it was because the BPP sought to revolutionize the nature of public service so that it was provided for the entirety of America, not just those traditionally given political preference, that the government felt extremely threatened.

Conclusion

While the Black Panther Party’s legacy goes far beyond armed revolution, it is important to note that the group’s hardened and almost mythic persona was not unfounded, but rather quite the opposite. The truth of the matter is that the BPP was involved in as many illegal and dangerous activities during its existence as it was positive ones. Members of its leadership, most notably Aaron Dixon (b.1949), who was the head of the Seattle branch of the BPP, have in their own words and interviews come out publicly in agreement with the party’s dual nature. In his memoir, *My People Are Rising: Memoir of a Black Panther Party Captain*, Dixon describes how the party in Seattle was responsible for firebombing and sniping campaigns against racist and innocent businesses alike. He even goes so far as to admit that such campaigns led to

³⁸ The Black Panther Party, “The Black Panther: Intercommunal News Service,” *The Black Panther* 3, no. 1, April 27, 1969, 4, https://files.libcom.org/files/Vol_III_No1_1969_1.pdf.

newspapers publishing a chart of the ten cities most affected by such acts, with Seattle topping the list for firebombing, and coming in second only to Detroit and Chicago, for sniping - something which Dixon notes he and his fellow Panthers were proud of at the time.³⁹ With this being said, it is important still to recognize that the party, by giving special attention to reproductive injustices as they did using their survival programs, deserves a well-rounded memory, rather than one that is wholly positive or negative.

It is still undeniable then, that the Panthers in essence were making life more livable for African Americans, both by making the lack of reproductive justice in their communities known and by seeking to tackle such injustices by any means necessary. In doing so, they not only caused such inequalities to be brought to light but empowered African Americans to become self-actualized commanders of their own destinies. Their revolutionary use of donations to create People's Free Medical Clinics, Liberation Schools, and Free Breakfast for Children Programs, cannot be ignored as an express indication of their devotion to individuals who had long been made unable to live and raise children safely in their communities. This push for community-based survival programs by the party to provide solutions to people's day-to-day needs beyond the issues of segregation and police brutality, can then clearly be understood as direct opposition to the established black-white power dynamic. When considering that such a dynamic had led to generations of social and physical insecurity which modern-day reproductive justice seeks to address, it is fair to say that the Black Panther Party acted as an early proponent of reproductive justice. Ultimately, it was the realization by the party and its leaders, that their communities' social inequities went deeper than just surface-level problems, that allowed the Black Panther Party to not only be so significant in their own time but what also makes them still relevant today.

³⁹ Aaron Dixon, *My People Are Rising: Memoir of a Black Panther Party Captain* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2012), 129.

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Author Bio

Dakota Mancuso is a California State University, San Bernardino alumnus, who graduated in 2022 with a Bachelor of Arts in history, with an emphasis in education. Now pursuing his Master of Education and his elementary teaching credential, Dakota aspires to be a middle school social studies and language arts teacher. His research as an undergrad in Professor Alicia Gutierrez-Romine’s history capstone course led him to become interested in the critical field of reproductive justice, and in turn, its relationship to the African American Civil Rights and Black Power movements. This interest led to the development of the research paper “The Black Panther Party and Reproductive Justice,” over the course of a year, which with the editorial help of Professor Alicia Gutierrez-Romine and *History in the Making* editor Rossandra Martinez, has been published in print. The paper, which seeks to unearth how the work of the activist political organization, the Black Panther Party, acted as an early pioneer of modern reproductive justice, intends to highlight the more positive side of the party’s history which has so often been neglected in academia.



Student and Youth Sandinistas in Nicaragua, 1979-2018

By Viviana Alvarez Rodriguez

Abstract: In June 1979, Sandinista forces in Nicaragua successfully overthrew a decades-long multi-generational United States-backed military dictatorship. The vanguard, a diverse coalition of secondary and university students, youth, clergy, and peasants, defeated the highly-trained Guardia Nacional (National Guard) and ended the authoritarian Somoza regime. This paper examines how Carlos Fonseca and other Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN) leaders resisted the liberal reformist model inherited by student-youth of the late 1960s to demand a more radical political platform. By bringing a relatively isolated student movement into the masses, this paper seeks to understand how a privileged class of university students became active participants in the revolutionary struggle. In addition, an analysis of contemporary student-youth activism in Nicaragua sheds light on how university organizing by the FSLN has shaped student activism outside the confines of the university space itself, particularly in examining the student-led mass mobilizations of 2018.

Introduction

In 2018, student protesters flooded the streets of Managua, Nicaragua's capital, following the announcement of a proposal by the Daniel Ortega (b.1945) regime to cut social security benefits. The protests made international headlines across multiple media platforms; one publication covering the protests titled their piece "Nicaragua: The Revolution Betrayed."¹ Student-youth protesting

¹ Jose Zepeda, "Nicaragua: The Revolution Betrayed," *Open Democracy*, September 26, 2021,

issues in the public sphere is not a new phenomenon. For the past forty years, students in Nicaragua have been actively involved in mass mobilization. But this was not always the case. In fact, before the 1979 Revolution, student-youth protests remained relatively limited in scope, as students mobilized to address issues on university campuses like funding and faculty. Outside the area of education, student-youth activists tended to refrain from national politics. However, when they did critique the regime, students raised concerns about ‘undemocratic’ processes.² Student-youth involvement in mass mobilization within the public sphere demonstrates how these changes within student activism since the 1979 Revolution remain in Nicaragua today.

By co-opting the existing structure of student-youth activism, the *Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional* (FSLN) successfully expanded student platforms and mobilization beyond the confines of privileged university spaces. Through revolutionary messaging, literacy campaigns, and university organizing, the socialist vision of a rural peasant uprising held by the party’s founder, Carlos Fonseca (1936-1976), was ingrained in the consciousness of a relatively privileged student class. This paper outlines how FSLN tactics indoctrinated student-youth activists and pushed against liberal reformist agendas within the university space. Moreover, I argue that since the 1979 Nicaraguan Revolution, recent student-youth protests in Nicaragua have continued to vocalize broader social issues and working-class demands like social security than pre-revolution student activism.

Education, Economics, and Socio-Political Conditions Under the Somoza Regime

The Somoza regime rose to power after the 1937 coup d’etat that overthrew President Juan Bautista Sacasa (1874-1946). Anastasio

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/democraciaabierta/nicaragua-the-revolution-betrayed-/>

² Claudia Rueda, *Students of Revolution: Youth, Protest, and Coalition Building in Somoza-Era Nicaragua* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2019), 21-24.

Somoza Garcia (1896-1956), who led the coup, gained significant popularity through his leadership in the United States-established *Guardia Nacional* (National Guard), which was created to facilitate the occupation of Nicaragua by the U.S. Marines between 1912 and 1932.³ The United States operated the *Guardia Nacional* until the election of President Sacasa in 1933. After that, the *Guardia Nacional* retained its relationship with the United States by receiving training and weapons. In 1937, Somoza Garcia overthrew President Sacasa by rallying support from factions in both the Liberal and Conservative parties by marketing himself as a non-partisan politician. Despite his involvement in the *Guardia Nacional's* suppression of Augusto César Sandino's (1895-1934) nationalist peasant rebellion from 1927-1933, Somoza Garcia rose to power by relying heavily on nationalist rhetoric.⁴

In the mid-twentieth century, when Somoza Garcia took power, Nicaragua's economy primarily relied on exporting a few specialized products like coffee and bananas for revenue. At the same time, most in the country, except the business and land-owning elites, remained impoverished.⁵ Somoza Garcia initially promised to support the working class of Nicaragua and even championed stricter labor codes to help exploited workers. However, after being elected in 1937, Somoza Garcia failed to pass measures when they challenged his support among the business-owning elite, often pushing the national congress to pass labor codes helping workers instead of taking action himself.⁶ Additionally, Somoza Garcia implemented policies that enriched those with close connections to the regime, such as wealthy landowners and *somocistas* (ardent Somoza supporters in

³ Knut Walter, *The Regime of Anastasio Somoza 1936-1956* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 55.

⁴ Walter, *The Regime of Anastasio Somoza*, 55.

⁵ Victor Bulmer-Thomas, "Nicaragua since 1930," in *The Cambridge History of Latin America*, ed. Leslie Bethell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 320.

⁶ Walter, *The Regime of Anastasio Somoza*, 58-60; Jeffrey L. Gould, "For an Organized Nicaragua: Somoza and the Labour Movement, 1944-1948," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 19:2 (1987): 357-58.

Nicaragua), while *campesinos* (rural and often indigenous farmers) remained illiterate and living in extreme poverty.

Another source of popular discontent under Somoza Garcia was the lack of democratic practices by the regime. Following his election, Somoza Garcia used his influence within his party, the *Partido Liberal Nacionalista* (PLN), to have parliament amend the constitution. These amendments included giving Somoza Garcia control over municipal governments and the *Guardia Nacional*, and suspending national elections until 1947. Those provisions allowed Somoza Garcia to remain in power well past Nicaragua's four-year democratic term limits.⁷ A growing resentment towards this enormous expansion of power made Somoza Garcia's 1947 election plans highly unpopular, resulting in the installation of a puppet candidate named Leonardo Arguello (1875-1947). While Somoza Garcia believed Arguello lacked the self-reliance to govern for himself, Arguello set in motion plans to block Somoza Garcia's intervention in the regime. In response, Somoza Garcia organized a coup and reinstated himself in May 1947.⁸

Due to increased exports following World War II, Nicaragua experienced significant economic growth under the Somoza regime. As the middle class expanded and the country underwent urbanization, enrollment in secondary schools increased significantly.⁹ Still, access to education and literacy in pre-revolutionary Nicaragua was reserved for children of the elite and middle classes.¹⁰ The Somoza regime proved ineffectual in meeting the increasing needs of students, and although the number of intermediate schools rose by 130, they failed to match the population growth. Furthermore, these institutions were often located in urban areas, leaving rural Nicaraguans with less access

⁷ Walter, *The Regime of Anastasio Somoza*, 103; Rueda, *Students of Revolution*, 26.

⁸ Rueda, *Students of Revolution*, 53-56.

⁹ Rueda, *Students of Revolution*, 95.

¹⁰ Francisco J. Barbosa, "July 23, 1959: Student Protest and State Violence as Myth and Memory in León, Nicaragua," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 85:2 (2005): 192.

to education.¹¹ The regime's failure to expand education to rural areas meant that peasant youth remained illiterate, lacked opportunities for upward mobility through education, and remained in a continual cycle of poverty and exploitation by wealthy landowners. In the 1950s, literacy rates in Nicaragua were as low as fifty percent in the cities and twenty-five percent in rural areas.¹² Illiteracy among rural peasants remained a problem unaddressed by the Somoza regime until the launch of literacy campaigns by the *Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional* (FSLN) throughout their occupation of Nicaragua's mountainous ranges during the revolution.¹³

Pre-Revolution Opposition and Student Protest

Student protests and activism were not uncommon in Latin America throughout the 1940s and 1950s. University students protested authoritarian regimes and education conditions in Guatemala, Cuba, and El Salvador. Nicaragua was no different; student protests occurred on university campuses in Managua and Leon, the country's two largest cities. Demonstrations and opposition became so frequent that Anastasio Somoza Garcia, who in 1941 opened a public university in Managua, closed it six years later due to the student resistance to his re-election bid.¹⁴

Nicaraguans remember the "July 23rd" protest in Leon in 1959, which became one of the most impactful precursors to student-youth participation in the revolution. The protest followed the government and the *Guardia Nacional's* restriction to an

¹¹ Claudia Rueda, "¡A La Huelga! Secondary Students, School Strikes, and the Power of Educational Activism in 1970s Nicaragua," *The Americas* 77:4 (2020): 602-03.

¹² Peter Sandiford et al, "The Nicaraguan Literacy Crusade: How Lasting Were Its Benefits?" *Development in Practice* 4:1 (1994): 35.

¹³ Matilde Zimmerman, *Sandinista: Carlos Fonseca And The Nicaraguan Revolution* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000) 102-05.

¹⁴ Jose Luis Rocha "University Struggles in Nicaragua: How we got to the 1959 student massacre," *Revista Envio* 446, September 2018, <https://www.envio.org.ni/articulo/5536>

annual festival celebrating incoming university students. Because of rising anti-authoritarian sentiments among the student body, the government began to view any mass demonstration or gathering as a threat to its power. Students, growingly frustrated with the dictatorial regime and the *Guardia Nacional's* violence and abuse of power, purposely ignored the restrictions and marched wearing traditional funeral attire and waving the Nicaraguan flag to symbolize the death of the nation's spirit under the Somoza regime. Conflict between the guard and the students broke out, and four students were murdered: Erick Ramírez, Mauricio Martínez, José Rubí, and Sergio Saldaña following the *Guardia Nacional's* decision to shoot at the protesters.¹⁵ The murder of these students resulted in national outrage as concerns grew about the regime's use of violence against youth. The protestors' funerary attire,— formal black clothing—opposition to the Somoza regime, and *Guardia Nacional's* presence further garnered mass support among the people of Nicaragua.¹⁶ Moreover, their mobilization demonstrated that despite the *Guardia Nacional's* efforts to hinder campus gatherings, students felt compelled to challenge limitations imposed by the regime openly.

Organizations like the *Juventud Universitaria Somocista* (JUS) provided on-campus support for Somoza as the regime became more tyrannical. But the JUS lost significant traction as opposition to the Somozas became more common on university campuses after the 1959 student massacre. According to Jose Luis Rocha,

The massacre of July 23, 1959, put the JUS out of circulation. Its members lost all credibility due to their complicity. In the student council's first presidential elections the following year, 778 of the by then 1,200 registered students voted. The Liberal

¹⁵ Barbosa, "July 23, 1959," 188-92.

¹⁶ Barbosa, "July 23, 1959," 192.

(pro-Somoza) candidate got only 78 votes. The anti-Somoza sentiment was now a majority.¹⁷

Loss of support for Somoza Garcia following the student massacre demonstrated that many youths valued the importance of solidarity with those who marched against the Somoza regime's abuses and remained critical of the administration.

Despite a growing desire among some students to challenge Somoza Garcia, not all were united in their disdain. While Somoza Garcia rose to power as a self-declared Liberal, many students prior to the revolution became indoctrinated by the writings of Pedro Chamorro (1924-1978), a liberal journalist and opposition writer for *La Prensa*, a popular Nicaraguan newspaper.¹⁸ Chamorro criticized the Somoza regime for its anti-democratic practices and the abuses of the *Guardia Nacional*; many of these criticisms resonated with students who desired change through liberal reform.¹⁹

Several on-campus organizations made significant student activism possible in the 1950s and 1960s. For one, the *Federacion Mundial de Juventud Democratica* (FMJD) promoted democracy through liberal reform. This meant that they believed that by undergoing some reforms to secure individual rights, the regime would be more democratic. Among its most notable members was Carlos Fonseca, who later formed the FSLN. During a trip to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics sponsored by the organization, Fonseca became inspired by the country's rapid social and industrial developments through socialism; this inspiration later drove the vision of the Sandinista Front in Nicaragua.²⁰

¹⁷ Rocha, "University struggles in Nicaragua."

¹⁸ Rueda, *Students of Revolution*, 78-80.

¹⁹ Rueda, *Students of Revolution*, 78-80.

²⁰ Carlos Fonseca, "Un Nicaragüense en Moscú," (Managua, 1980), Retrieved from <https://sajurin.enriquebolanos.org/docs/Un%20nicarag%C3%BCense%20en%20Moscu.pdf>

Besides organizing in the FMJD, pre-revolution activism among students led Somoza Garcia to allow the formation of a Socialist Party in Nicaragua.²¹ Although the organization was named the *Partido Socialista Nicaraguense* (PSN), its platform was liberal and advocated for change through reform. The PSN supported the Somoza regime and offered a space for a mild critique of the government.²² While the formation of the PSN seemed like an achievement in moving the Somoza regime left, it failed, and like many other concessions offered by the administration, there lacked fundamental reforms to make the government less dictatorial. During Fonseca's participation in the organization, he and Tomas Borge (1930-2012), who helped found the FSLN, challenged this liberal reform approach by publishing articles in *El Universitario*, the student newspaper at the National Autonomous University of Nicaragua (UNAN). Fonseca criticized the Somoza regime for the lack of rural education expansion and a limited tax on exports to benefit wealthy mining and agriculture corporations abroad.²³ As Borge recalled in a tribute to Fonseca, "We published statistics without metaphor; 250,000 children without teachers; only five percent taxation to the mining companies on the gold they export."²⁴ While these publications raised awareness about income inequality and the need for educational reform within the University, the party's leadership did not consider Fonseca and Borge's demands for mobilization to address these issues.²⁵ Still, their publication in a university newspaper attempted to create a consciousness about

²¹ Claudia Rueda, "Agents of Effervescence: Student Protest and Nicaragua's Post-war Democratic Mobilizations," *Journal of Social History* 52:2 (2018): 391-93.

²² Zimmerman, *Sandinista*, 64-65.

²³ Tomas Borge, *Carlos, the dawn is no longer beyond our reach*, translated by Margaret Randall (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1984), 18.

²⁴ Borge, *Carlos, the dawn is no longer beyond our reach*, 18.

²⁵ Borge, *Carlos, the dawn is no longer beyond our reach*, 18; For more on Fonseca's criticisms of the PSN, see "Nicaragua: Zero Hour" in *Sandinistas Speak: Speeches, writings, and interviews with leaders of Nicaragua's revolution*, ed. by Bruce Marcus (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1982).

economic inequality among the student class, which their predecessors had not addressed.

The Rise of Student Sandinistas

The *Frente Sandinista De Liberación Nacional* (FSLN) was founded by student activists Silvio Mayorga (1934-1967), Carlos Fonseca, and Tomas Borge in 1961.²⁶ The FSLN used the image of Augusto Sandino as a basis for their ideological beliefs. Sandino successfully led a peasant uprising against the U.S. Marines' occupation of northern Nicaragua during the late 1920s.²⁷ Carlos Fonseca, the leader of the FSLN, primarily sought to create a peasant uprising against the U.S.-backed Somoza regime with similar nationalist sentiments as Sandino.²⁸ Historians have pointed to the influences of the success of Cuba in amplifying the voice of a martyr figure for the cause of revolution, like Fidel Castro's evocation of the writings of Cuban nationalist Jose Martí.²⁹ Similarly, Carlos Fonseca sought to unite Nicaraguans around a prominent figure that could evoke the same sentiments of nationalism and solidarity as Martí had in Cuba.³⁰

At the time of the creation of the FSLN, Sandino's legacy had been commemorated by journalist Pedro Chamorro, a student activist in the 1950s himself, though not to the scale that Fonseca was attempting with the creation of the Sandinista Liberation

²⁶ Zimmerman, *Sandinista*, 76.

²⁷ Richard Grossman, "The nation is our mother: Augusto Sandino and the construction of a peasant nationalism in Nicaragua, 1927-1934," *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 35:1 (2008): 82-85.

²⁸ Zimmerman, *Sandinista*, 70-76.

²⁹ Steven Palmer, "Carlos Fonseca and the Construction of Sandinismo in Nicaragua," *Latin American Research Review* 23:1 (1988): 91-93.

³⁰ Jose Martí was a Cuban nationalist writer considered one of the major figures of the independence movement from Spain in the 19th century. Martí's work and ideology was frequently cited by revolutionaries in the Cuban revolution of 1959.

Front.³¹ Nicaraguans lacked a central figure that could unite them against tyranny as a nation, with many aspects of media and education controlled by the state, Nicaraguans had not heard of or known enough about Sandino and his struggle against the Somoza-led *Guardia Nacional* during the 1930s.³² In 1936, after the murder of Sandino by the *Guardia Nacional*, Anastasio Somoza Garcia even published a book denouncing the nationalist martyr in order to tarnish his reputation among the masses.³³ Recognizing the need for the construction of a nationalist hero and Somoza Garcia's role in suppressing Sandino's rebellion, the FSLN opted to use the legacy of Sandino to garner popular support for the revolution.

In 1961, Borge and Fonseca planned the upstart of the revolution in Honduras. That year, Fonseca published an article outlining his vision of transformation in Nicaragua. He acknowledged that student-youth activism had significantly challenged the existing political regime. However, he argued for strong participation in leftist youth mobilization.

Let's talk now about the role that the youth of the Nicaraguan people have to play in this historical stage that we are living today (..) For many years, the urban middle class of Nicaragua has not been able to become independent from the old liberal and conservative political parties, and the most that it has come to is to form tiny groups that have often reached the ridiculous point of not even having enough people to compose a reduced national directive. Let's not say that they have lacked

³¹ Palmer, "Carlos Fonseca and the Construction of Sandinismo in Nicaragua," 94.

³² Anastasio Somoza Garcia, *El Verdadero Sandino: O, El calvario de las Segovias* (Managua: Editorial and Lithography San José, 1976).

³³ Somoza Garcia, *El Verdadero Sandino*.

organizations in the various departments into which the country is divided.³⁴

While Fonseca recognized the impact of student-youth activism, he argued that leftist activists never reached a significant base and were still the minority, even in groups like the PSN. Upon Fonseca and Borge's return to Nicaragua, their first task did not involve garnering support among the masses or announcing the creation of the FSLN. Instead, they began forming an entirely different organization called the *Federación de Estudiantes Revolucionarios* (FER).³⁵

The FER aimed to get students at the university level involved in the revolutionary struggle. The urgency of creating such an organization among FSLN leadership demonstrated that Borge and Fonseca recognized that having student-youth in the vanguard was crucial to the success of the FSLN. By 1968, the FER succeeded in garnering student support and even recruiting many into the FSLN.³⁶ Their newfound power at the National Autonomous University of Nicaragua in Managua came from the election of Sandinista members to the *Consejo Universitario de la Universidad de Nicaragua* (CUUN), the student council at the University of Nicaragua.³⁷ Now having power in the student government and an on-campus revolutionary organization of their own, the FSLN recruited various students into their ranks.³⁸

Unlike liberal-reformist organizations at the UNAN, Catholics were one group that did actively criticize income inequality in Nicaragua. At the Second Episcopal Conference of Latin America in 1968, also known as the Medellín Conference,

³⁴ Carlos Fonseca, "The Fight For the Transformation of Nicaragua," *Centro de Documentación de los Movimientos Armados* (Political Publication, Nicaragua, 1960), https://cedema.org/digital_items/1807

³⁵ Zimmerman, *Sandinista*, 76-77.

³⁶ Omar Cabezas, *Fire from the Mountain: The Making of a Sandinista* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1986), 5.

³⁷ Zimmerman, *Sandinista*, 76; Cabezas, *Fire from the Mountain*, 6.

³⁸ Cabezas, *Fire from the Mountain*, 6.

clergy leaders discussed the need for Catholics and the Church to address issues of economic inequality and class struggle, especially throughout Latin America, where Catholicism remained a strong presence. This gave rise to Liberation Theology, a new view of the religion where Catholics had a religious duty to oppose the oppression and mistreatment of marginalized groups like the poor. Catholicism, which had and continues to have an overwhelming influence on Nicaraguan society, was utilized by local priests and religious students as a unifier in formulating a religious opposition movement. As one scholar put it, “One group of revolutionary Christians believed that the needs of the people could best be served through an ideology of human liberation based on a Marxist critique requiring an armed insurrection.”³⁹ In contrast to liberal and conservative critiques of the regime, many liberation theologians in Nicaragua shared a common Marxist critique of the Somoza regime and desired a fundamental change to the economic system the Somozas used to enrich themselves instead of alleviating the poor.⁴⁰

In addition, Catholic priests and student leaders worked closely with one another to protest the regime in various ways, such as strikes and cathedral occupations. As Fernando Cardenal (1934-2016), a Jesuit priest heavily involved in the revolution, recalled:

The most significant moment was the first occupation of the Cathedral in Managua on September 28, 1970. Three of us priests accompanied about a hundred students from the Catholic Universidad Centroamericana (UCA) in a hunger strike at the Cathedral of Managua, demanding that the lives of the university students recently captured be respected, that we might speak

³⁹ John-Paul Wilson, “Church, State, and Society during the Nicaraguan Revolution,” *Diálogos Latinoamericanos* 16 (2009): 115- 119.

⁴⁰ Wilson, “Church, State, and Society during the Nicaraguan Revolution,” 115-119.

with them, and that, as the law of Nicaragua demanded, at the end of ten days they be freed or appear before a judge with specific charges against them.⁴¹

The coalition built between students and the clergy was immensely important given the essential role religion plays in Nicaraguan everyday life. By creating an alliance between the FSLN and the Church, both groups could create enough civil unrest to overthrow Anastasio Somoza Debayle (1925-1980), Somoza Garcia's son, in 1979. Students utilized the church's base to gain momentum outside university campuses and into Nicaraguan society. In addition, the clergy's public displays of sympathy and solidarity towards students unfairly imprisoned and mistreated by the regime demonstrated the Somozas' brutal response to criticism of loyal Catholics.

On some occasions, youth in Nicaragua became infatuated with the ideals of the revolution and even purposely enrolled at the UNAN to integrate themselves into the movement.⁴² Members recruited at the University did a variety of tasks; many went into the mountain ranges and armed combat with the *Guardia Nacional*. Some students who stayed behind helped the organization by recruiting at the university and finding ways to gain national attention for the revolution like flooding the streets of Managua with propaganda and even robbing banks.⁴³ Due to the high levels of illiteracy in Nicaragua at the time of the revolution, Sandinista students found creative ways to spread their messaging among the masses, most notably through political comics.⁴⁴ These

⁴¹ Fernando Cardenal, "A Letter to my Friends," *Index on Censorship*, March 1985.

⁴² Jose Luis Rocha, "Las Luchas universitarias durante el somocismo," *Revista Envio* 439, October, 2018, <https://www.envio.org.ni/articulo/5541>

⁴³ Cabezas, *Fire from the Mountain*, 10-14.

⁴⁴ Christiane Berth, "Four Comics in a Revolutionary Context: Educational Campaigns and Collective Memory in Sandinista Nicaragua," in *Comics and Memory in Latin America*, ed. Jorge L. Catalá Carrasco, Paulo Drinot, and James Scorer (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2017), 109.

efforts to make the messaging of FSLN propaganda and revolutionary ideals accessible to those in rural Nicaragua demonstrated that students and Sandinista leadership recognized the importance of moving the revolution out of the university space and into the masses.

In 1968, Fonseca urged students at the University to step out of their comfortable positions as students who supported the revolution's ideals but failed to physically put their lives on the line to participate.⁴⁵ As he argued,

While student guerrillas have shed their blood, the revolutionary students have essentially stayed in the classroom with their arms crossed (...) the solidarity of the organized student's movement was limited to offering simple proclamations of condolences... At the origin of student inactivity are the revolutionary students' lack of political discipline and the capitalist penetration of the nation's two universities.⁴⁶

Largely, Fonseca had been critical of students for failing to use their privilege to fight alongside those attempting to overthrow the dictatorial regime, which they understood was essential to building a democratic society. In addition to urging more radical participation from students at the university level, Fonseca had also pushed the FER to engage with students at secondary schools and involve them in the FSLN.⁴⁷

The rhetoric employed by the Sandinista Front leader, Carlos Fonseca, stressed the importance of youth participation in the revolution, treating youth and students as powerful voices in the political development of Nicaragua, resulting in an influx of

⁴⁵ Zimmerman, *Sandinista*, 102.

⁴⁶ Rocha, "University struggles in Nicaragua."

⁴⁷ Carlos Fonseca, "Mensaje del Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional, FSLN, a los estudiantes Revolucionarios," in *Obras* vol. 1 (Managua: 1985), 129.

socially and politically aware young men and women with the overarching desire to determine the political landscape of the country themselves.⁴⁸ The FSLN took several measures to attract youth and students into their ranks and succeeded; according to journalist Carlos Vilas, “seventy-one percent of those killed during the insurrection were between 15 and 24 years of age, and students composed the largest sector of participants in the insurrection.”⁴⁹ According to Magda Enriquez, a member of the Council of State in Nicaragua—who, in her youth, joined the revolution secretly—several young members of the FSLN deliberately lied about their age to actively resist the Somoza regime.⁵⁰ Children as young as twelve served as guerillas during the revolution, demonstrating that some youth in Nicaragua willingly gave up their childhood and adolescence for the revolution.

The success of the FSLN in attracting youth and students into their ranks had several reasons. Some historians attempt to explain this phenomenon by pointing out that the *Guardia Nacional* often targeted youth and students, and the Sandinistas became the Guard’s most ferocious opponents.⁵¹ Attacks on children by the *Guardia Nacional* demonstrated that the Somoza regime was often responsible for stripping their youth. In addition, some sociologists argue that male children in Nicaragua during the revolution felt a moral obligation to abandon their youth much more quickly and enter manhood due to the loss of stable family structure caused by guerilla warfare and mass government persecution by the *Guardia Nacional*.⁵² This could have largely

⁴⁸ Zimmerman, *Sandinista*, 102.

⁴⁹ Carlos Vilas, *The Sandinista Revolution: National Liberation and Social Transformation in Central America* (New York: Monthly Review, 1986), 108.

⁵⁰ Victoria Brittain, “Daughter of the Nicaraguan Revolution,” *The Guardian*, March 20, 1984.

⁵¹ James Quesada, “Suffering Child: An Embodiment of War and Its Aftermath in Post-Sandinista Nicaragua,” *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 12:1 (1998): 54.

⁵² Quesada, “Suffering Child: An Embodiment of War and Its Aftermath in Post-Sandinista Nicaragua,” 54.

contributed to the desire among young men to participate in the war and willingly endanger their lives for the revolution.

While these could have been explanations for youths wanting to join the guerillas, it is important to not dismiss that many students and youth had genuine grievances with the Somoza regime and developed ideologically with the influence of the FSLN. As Luis Ernesto Gomez, a twenty-year-old mechanic interviewed following the victory of the FSLN, explained,

When I wasn't so aware of the struggle, I was romantic, I saw it as a great adventure: "Christ! These FSLN guys are well trained, really cool. I want to be with the FSLN!" But later I realized that it was necessary to think of it as more than an adventure; not just to think about how well trained these *compañeros* were—but about why they fought.⁵³

While youth and students were encapsulated by the romanticism surrounding FSLN and resistance to the authoritarian government, many had grown conscious of the political situation in Nicaragua and joined the ranks to fulfill a more prosperous future for the country.

An often neglected aspect of the conversation about youth participation in the revolution is that women made up some of the revolution's most diligent participants, many students, or women who had received formal education.⁵⁴ Several educated women joined the guerilla ranks to advance women's rights in Nicaragua, believing that equal rights for women aligned with the revolution's ideals.⁵⁵ Carlos Fonseca, the founder of the FSLN, had been

⁵³ Envio Digital "And the People Rose Up; Testimonies of the Insurrection in Masaya," *Revista Envío* 96, July, 1989, <https://www.envio.org.ni/articulo/2722>

⁵⁴ Mary Louisa Cappelli, "Women of the revolution: Gendered politics of resistance and agency in the cultural production of Margaret Randall," *Cogent Arts and Humanities* 4:1(2014): 3-4.

⁵⁵ Cappelli, "Women of the revolution," 3-4.

adamant about including women in the revolutionary struggle as he viewed them as an essential part of Nicaraguan society and even made the struggle for women's advancement a central part of the FSLN revolutionary program.⁵⁶

Despite including women in the FSLN and Fonseca's beliefs regarding gender equality, many women in the FSLN still occupied gendered roles. Because messaging was important to garnering support for the revolution, young women in the FSLN most often took on the roles of photographers for the revolution. Margarita Montealegre (b. 1956) and Claudia Gordillo (b.1954), who were photographers for the FSLN during the Nicaraguan revolution, used their identity as women guerillas to photograph marginalized communities during the revolution, their most notable subjects being young women, youth, and mothers.⁵⁷ Although Sandinista women could join as guerrillas, it is reported that while thirty percent of the FSLN comprised women, only 6.6 percent served in combat.⁵⁸ Despite the disparities in participation, many women were dedicated to the revolutionary struggle and would defy societal expectations by being in the vanguard to overthrow the Somoza regime.

The Overthrow of Somoza and Outcomes of the Revolution

In 1974, FSLN forces split into three factions that advocated for different ways to carry out the revolution.⁵⁹ At the time the organization divided, Carlos Fonseca was hiding from the *Guardia Nacional* in Honduras. However, upon seeing divisions within the party, Fonseca ventured back to Nicaragua to mend relationships

⁵⁶ Zimmerman, *Sandinista*, 115.

⁵⁷ Illeana L. Selejan, "Women's Work: Photographers of the Sandinista Revolution," *Photography and Culture* 13:3 (2020): 341-2.

⁵⁸ Cappelli, "Women of the revolution," 3.

⁵⁹ Gerardo Nateras Sanchez, "The Sandinista Revolution and the Limits of the Cold War in Latin America: The Dilemma of Non-Intervention During the Nicaraguan Crisis, 1977-78," *Cold War History* 18:2 (2018): 115-17.

among the factions and reunify Sandinista forces. On November 7, 1976, while making a return to Nicaragua the *Guardia Nacional* discovered FSLN forces and Fonseca was murdered in an ambush.

Although Fonseca's death failed to immediately unify the guerillas, it fueled a massive insurgency among the tendencies. As a result, the Somoza regime declared a state of emergency which authorized the *Guardia Nacional* to raid villages to end civil dissent.⁶⁰ During this period, large numbers of Sandinistas were murdered or jailed and tortured by the *Guardia* as political prisoners.⁶¹ In response, students at the university and in secondary schools across the country organized strikes to protest the government's inhumane treatment of political prisoners and on several occasions, they succeeded at securing the release of the imprisoned.⁶² During the heightened combat between FSLN guerrillas and the *Guardia* American photographer Susan Meiselas (b. 1948) published one of the most memorable photographs of the revolution. The photograph which became known as *Molotov Man* depicts a young guerrilla in battle with a Molotov cocktail in one hand and a rifle in the other, prominently wearing a rosary around his neck.⁶³ The image that made international headlines by evoking the role of youth and religion in the revolution.

Some historians debate the importance of Sandinista coalition building and guerrilla forces in the outcome of the revolution. They contend that government oppression during Somoza's state of emergency served as a catalyst for a mass uprising and that the ability of the FSLN to mobilize efficiently and overthrow the regime was largely based on the structure of the

⁶⁰ Jean-Pierre Reed, "Emotions in Context: Revolutionary Accelerators, Hope, Moral Outrage, and Other Emotions in the Making of Nicaragua's Revolution," *Theory and Society* 33:6 (2004): 670.

⁶¹ Claudia Rueda, "¡A La Huelga!" 604.

⁶² Rueda, "¡A La Huelga!" 604.

⁶³ Gilles Bataillon, "Los 'muchachos' in the Sandinista Revolution," *Estudios sociológicos* 31:92 (2013): 306.

state at that point.⁶⁴ However, while the state of emergency accelerated the height of the revolution, it was done by strengthening pre-existing coalitions.

In March of 1979, the three tendencies unified and established a National Directorate, giving a democratic voice to each faction.⁶⁵ As Katherine Hoyt, a Sandinista who tended to a guerilla safehouse during the revolution, recalls, many Nicaraguans anticipated the end of the overthrow of Somoza during the last confrontations between the FSLN and the *Guardia Nacional*, which were unprecedentedly brutal.⁶⁶ Now unified, the FSLN launched massive urban uprisings, more fatal than any other insurgencies that had taken place throughout the revolution. Of the 6,000 individuals who died during the final insurrection, twenty-nine percent had been students, and about seventy-five percent were between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four.⁶⁷

On June 16th the provisional government under Daniel Ortega, who had led the *tercerista* faction during the revolution, marched into Leon, the newly established capital of Nicaragua.⁶⁸ The new Sandinista government engaged in various reforms immediately following the revolution. Among them were massive education campaigns led by volunteers.⁶⁹ In addition, the government encouraged clergy to travel to Nicaragua's impoverished countryside to teach and provide the poor with food and other necessities.⁷⁰ Reforms in education access demonstrated

⁶⁴ Phil Ryan, "Structure, Agency, and the Nicaraguan Revolution," *Theory and Society* 29:2 (2000): 191.

⁶⁵ Zimmerman, *Sandinista*, 216.

⁶⁶ Katherine Hoyt, "Nicaragua: Memories of the 1979 Final Offensive," *North American Congress on Latin America*, July 19, 2009.

⁶⁷ Zimmerman, *Sandinista*, 217.

⁶⁸ The *terceristas* became the most prominent leading up to the overthrow of the revolution, this faction of the FSLN formed a coalition with liberals following the government's failed response to the 1972 earthquake in Managua: Zimmerman, *Sandinista*, 220-21.

⁶⁹ Christiane Berth, "Four Comics in a Revolutionary Context", 109-10.

⁷⁰ Wilson, "Church, State, and Society during the Nicaraguan Revolution," 115-16.

the attentiveness of the new government to appease students who had demanded better education in Nicaragua and had been an integral part of the revolution.

Contemporary Youth and Student Movements In Nicaragua

Nicaraguans' have preserved the memory of anti-authoritarian student activism. As scholar Eric Cannon writes:

Barrio 14 de Junio is a ten-minute walk from the new cathedral. This working-class neighborhood of about 4,800 residents in southeastern Managua experienced combat during the final insurrection of 1979. It is named for the date during that year when Somoza's national guard massacred five of the barrio's youths, an event commemorated annually with an open-air mass led by members of the Christian base community and progressive priests.⁷¹

The outcomes of the revolution have deeply shaped contemporary Nicaraguan society. More than forty years after the 1979 insurrection, and one U.S.-funded regime change war later that briefly instituted Violetta Chamorro from 1990-2007—a liberal whom the *terceristas* had collaborated with to gain power after the death of her husband, Pedro Chamorro—Daniel Ortega and the Sandinistas remain in power. However, the regime that once mobilized a leftist insurrection against the Somozas is now under scrutiny, with students and youth again as the driving force. In the decade since the Sandinistas' reinstatement, Ortega and the FLSN have faced several criticisms; among them are criticisms of misogyny directed at party leadership and Ortega himself and

⁷¹ Eric Canin, "Work, a Roof, and Bread: Managua's Christian Base Communities in the Nicaraguan 'Revolution from Below,'" *Latin American Perspectives* 24:2 (1977): 92.

concerns about social safety nets and undemocratic practices.

In the 1960s, Fonseca was vocal about addressing many social issues student-youth activists have adopted today. The FSLN program written by Fonseca in 1969 addressed women's liberation in the post-revolution. In point twelve of the revolutionary program, *Emancipation of Women*, Fonseca wrote that the Sandinista revolution would end discrimination and disparities between men and women and "raise women's political, cultural, and vocational levels."⁷² Although young feminists eagerly joined the revolution hoping the leftist regime would champion women's rights in Nicaragua, and many participated as guerillas or did important work in maintaining safe houses for guerillas, young feminists have since become some of Ortega's staunchest critics. In 1998, Ortega's stepdaughter Zoilamérica Narváez Murillo accused the president of sexually abusing her as a child. In response, FSLN leadership refused to publicly hear her claims in front of an ethics committee, fearing losing power during a difficult time for the party as they faced civil conflict with the anti-Marxist U.S.-funded *Contras*.⁷³ Moreover, while the FSLN program states that a Sandinista government should endorse the liberation and autonomy of women, feminists in the nation argue that the strict abortion ban is counterproductive to women's liberation.⁷⁴

The regime has also been criticized for being anti-democratic. Since the revolution, key members of the FSLN have left the party, stating their inability to affect change in the Ortega regime.⁷⁵ Additionally, Ortega, who regained power in 2007,

⁷² Carlos Fonseca, "The Historic Program of the FSLN" in *Sandinistas Speak*, ed. by Bruce Marcus (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1982), 21.

⁷³ Diane Feeley, "Sandinismo is in the Streets," *Against the Current* 34:3 (2019), <https://againstthecurrent.org/atc201/nicaragua-2019/>; *Contras* were a right-wing rebel group backed by the United States that formed in opposition to the Sandinistas following their success in gaining political control in the 1979 Nicaraguan Revolution.

⁷⁴ Karen Kampwith, "Abortion, Antifeminism, and the Return of Daniel Ortega: In Nicaragua, Leftist Politics?" *Latin American Perspectives* 35:6 (2008):122.

⁷⁵ Feeley, "Sandinismo is in the Streets."

overruled the courts in the declaration of his 2011 re-election bid as unconstitutional.⁷⁶ Students and youth during the Somoza regime listed undemocratic practices as one of their main grievances. Today, the Sandinista government, which many supported with the hope that the organization would implement real democratic processes, is accused of harboring the same undemocratic power schemes as its predecessors by implementing constitutional changes to remain in power past five-year term limits.

The most contentious issue sparking recent activism in Nicaragua and the onset of the 2018 protests have been proposed changes by the government to social security and pensions that reduce payments to those receiving benefits while increasing the tax contributions made by workers and employers.⁷⁷ Because of these reforms, students who were already unhappy with the government's actions in various aspects organized in masses.

Since the revolution, students in Nicaragua have massively changed. Educational reforms made by the Sandinista government have greatly expanded access to education among the working class. Scholars argue that Nicaraguan students have developed a dual identity as workers and students since the revolution.⁷⁸ This dual identity helps explain why students organize around causes pertaining to the working class without the influence of an organization like the FSLN, who guided students into economically leftist politics during the revolution. Some student participants in the 2018 protests still hold the ideals of the revolution themselves, and others criticize how the Ortega regime has distorted Carlos Fonseca's vision of the revolution for his own

⁷⁶ Forrest D. Colburn and Arturo S. Cruz, "Personalism and Populism in Nicaragua," *Journal of Democracy* 23:2 (2012): 111.

⁷⁷ Jose Luis Rocha, *Provocation and Protest: University Students in Nicaragua's Uprisings* (Chicago, IL: La Casa Chicago Press, 2019), 15.

⁷⁸ Harry Sheer, "On Being a 'Worker Student': Understanding the Intersected Identities of Children and Adolescents in Nicaragua," *Children's Geographies* 15:1 (2016): 37-38.

personalist desires.⁷⁹ Moreover, contemporary students are taking it upon themselves to organize around the working-class demands of the government as opposed to solely a critique of school institutions. Fonseca often critiqued student activists during the 1950s and 1960s for failing to organize around issues of poverty and worker exploitation in Nicaragua and only making demands to aid students, who more often than not came from privileged backgrounds.⁸⁰ In a key component of the FSLN program titled *Labor Legislation and Social Security*, Fonseca addressed the need for a revolutionary government to end worker exploitation and implement social safety net programs, specifically a call for expansion of social security.⁸¹ With these ideals in mind, students quickly mobilized to oppose a social security measure that they viewed as a betrayal of the FSLN revolutionary program.

A commonality in the protestors' critiques of the Ortega regime is that student-youth protests encompass the language and ideals of the revolution. The distaste for the undemocratic nature of the Somoza regime has also emerged as a primary complaint against the Sandinista government. And Carlos Fonseca himself saw women's struggle as undoubtedly a part of the revolution, as did other feminists who participated as a way toward women's liberation. Despite the important contributions of women to the revolution, feminist activists in Nicaragua today view those efforts as having done little to advance women's liberation.⁸²

The regime eventually dropped the proposed legislation to cut social security in response to the mass protest which erupted after their announcement. The revolution championed social safety nets to aid the exploited working-class masses of Nicaragua, and that aspect of mobilization remains a central part of an expanding platform of student activism since the 1979 Revolution.

⁷⁹ Jose Luis Rocha, *Provocation and Protest*, 69.

⁸⁰ Zimmerman, *Sandinista*, 38-39.

⁸¹ Fonseca, "The Historic Program of the FSLN" in *Sandinistas Speak*, 19.

⁸² Diane Feeley, "Sandinismo is in the Streets," 4.

Conclusion

Since the reelection of Daniel Ortega in 2007, students and clergy have remained at odds with the regime. The Sandinista party has imprisoned several students and priests for their role in vocally criticizing the government. These persecutions come more than fifty years after the first occupation of the Old Cathedral of Managua in 1970, where students and clergy gathered to protest Anastasio Somoza Debayle's imprisonment of several student activists. The Managua Cathedral, which replaced the Old Cathedral after irreparable damage caused by the 1972 earthquake, has seen heavy policing by the regime since the 2018 protests. On August 13, 2022, the regime prevented the mass gathering of a procession for Our Lady of Fatima, arguing that the community event would be used to facilitate mass protests.⁸³ Once again, a regime that punishes vocal critics has terrorized a space of collective resistance in Nicaragua.

Like the Somoza regime, Ortega is also involved in controlling education. The University of Central America, a private Jesuit institution, is among the more than five educational institutions fighting for autonomy from the state. The FSLN has used educational institutions to consolidate their power by dismissing faculty critical of the regime's brutal handling of student protests. The Ortega regime now seeks more control over private institutions as well. Before the 1979 Revolution, it was not uncommon for faculty to be dismissed if they were vocal about their opposition to the Somoza regime. Students frequently mobilized to reinstate beloved faculty and fight against the encroachment of education by the government at the UNAN.⁸⁴

Indeed, despite threats of imprisonment and exile,

⁸³ Gabriella Selser and Maria Teresa Hernandez, "EXPLAINER: Tension between Nicaragua and the Catholic Church," *Associated Press News*, August 14, 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/religion-caribbean-nicaragua-daniel-ortega-a445a59fd605f8089c5e661cb66c2773>

⁸⁴ Rueda, *Students of Revolution*, 39.

students remain vocal dissidents of the regime. Carlos Fonseca's most vocal critique of student activists leading up to the 1979 Revolution had been their reluctance to move activism into the public sphere. Today, student activism in Nicaragua no longer solely encompasses educational demands or the university space. With a more diverse student body since pre-revolution Nicaragua, student activism is now directed at mobilizing youth by championing issues like women's liberation, workers' rights, and social safety net concerns.

The reminiscence of the revolution and students' collective understanding of the Ortega regime's failure to fulfill Carlos Fonseca's revolutionary vision has shaped students and youth at the center of contemporary political mobilization in Nicaragua. But unlike their predecessors, students of the contemporary movement no longer need an ardent voice like Fonseca to push their activism into the public sphere. They are a political force on their own.

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Judge Paul J. McCormick: The Prelude to Desegregation in the United States

By Jose Luis Castro Padilla

Abstract: Born into a Catholic family on April 23, 1879, in New York City, Paul J. McCormick became one of Los Angeles, California's most important federal judges. On March 21, 1946, Judge McCormick's judgment in favor of the Mendez v. Westminster case declared California schools must desegregate. Until that time, school segregation had relied on the 1896 court case, Plessy v. Ferguson, which justified it under racial segregation. McCormick's singular decision marked a watershed in the fight for civil rights in the United States. While Judge McCormick promoted justice, equality, and civil rights, his court decision desegregating schools on behalf of Mexican students would mark the beginning to the end of segregation throughout the United States.

Introduction

The case of *Mendez et al. v. Westminster School District of Orange County et al.*, 64 F. Supp. 544 (S.D. Cal. 1946) has been slighted by national historians and considered solely a local California historical event. By the late twentieth century, this case was studied by scholars such as Philippa Strum. In 2010, Philippa Strum published the first book on the case: *Mendez V. Westminster: School Desegregation and Mexican American Rights*. In the article "Our Children Are Americans," Philippa Strum noted, "Another possibility is that the orthodox narrative of civil rights in the United States portrayed the African American movement for legal equality as seminal, with other minority groups

supposedly piggybacking on the successes of that movement.”¹ In 2004, Joy C. Shaw concluded in the article, “Foreshadowing *Brown v. Board: The 1946 Case of Mendez v. Westminster*,” at *The California Supreme Historical Society Journal*, “Unlike *Brown*, the most celebrated court decision of the civil rights movement, *Mendez v. Westminster* faded into obscurity, left out of children’s history books and rarely mentioned by lawyers and judges.”² In the mid-twentieth century, civil rights activists focused on the American South and underestimated those Hispanics and other minorities who were also segregated and discriminated against. In the *Brown* proceeding, the case of *Mendez* was not cited, even though Judge Earl Warren read Judge Paul J. McCormick’s decision and mirrored his own decision after the *Mendez* case in the Supreme Court.³ In 2003, Carlos Moreno noted, “*Mendez v. Westminster*, a decision that determined discrimination based on national origin violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, is more than just a legal opinion; it presaged the dismantling of de jure segregation in public schools across the country.”⁴ In 2003, Sandra Robbie directed and produced *Mendez vs. Westminster: For All the Children/Para Todos los Niños*. The thirty-minute documentary helped show the *Mendez* case’s legacy in United States history. Most articles written about the *Mendez* case focused on the historical and legislative perspectives. This article draws attention to the social and personal perspectives of Judge McCormick, as

¹ Philippa Strum, “Our Children Are Americans: *Mendez V. Westminster* and Mexican American Rights,” in *The Pursuit of Racial and Ethnic Equality in American Public Schools*, (Michigan State University Press, 2014), 9.

² Joy C. Shaw, “Foreshadowing *Brown v. Board: The 1946 Case of Mendez v. Westminster*,” in *The California Supreme Historical Society Journal* (2004), accessed December 8, 2022, <https://www.cschs.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/2004-Newsletter-Fall-Foreshadowing-Brown.pdf>.

³ Shaw, “Foreshadowing *Brown v. Board*,” 1.

⁴ Carlos R Moreno, *Unpublished Speeches*. California Legal History, (2019), 94, accessed December 8, 2022, <https://www.cschs.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Legal-Hist-v.-14-Special-Section-Justice-Moreno-Speeches.pdf>.

well as the historical context of southern California, to provide new insights into the history of the Civil Rights Movement.

In Orange County, California, on March 2, 1945, a group of parents led by the Mendez family filed a lawsuit against four school districts within the county. One year later, on March 21, 1946, in the United States District Court for the Southern District of California, Los Angeles, Judge Paul J. McCormick announced his verdict, stating that even if the schools have the same facilities, they are not equal. In other words, “‘separate but equal’ was not equal at all.”⁵ Judge McCormick decided in favor of the Mendez family and prohibited school segregation. This conclusion surprised the Orange County Board of Education, which unsuccessfully appealed this decision in the Ninth Circuit of the U.S. Court of Appeals. On April 14, 1947, backed by several groups, including the American Jewish Congress, American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), National Lawyers Guild, Japanese American Citizens League, and National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Ninth Circuit of U.S. Court of Appeals upheld the *Mendez* ruling in San Francisco. The seven judges sustained McCormick’s decision and even decided that school officials may be criminally prosecuted for violation of civil rights.⁶

Judge Paul J. McCormick’s opinion in the *Mendez v. Westminster* case stated, “A paramount requisite in the American system of public education is social equality.”⁷ This decision was a watershed in the fight for civil rights in the United States that would end the school segregation that was supported by *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) which validated racial segregation. Judge McCormick would challenge the racial nativist rhetoric that began

⁵ Strum, “Our Children Are Americans,” 9.

⁶ “Case History,” *Mendez et al v. Westminster et al*, accessed February 12, 2023, <https://mendezetalvwestminster.com>.

⁷ Paul J. McCormick, *Mendez v. Westminster, Conclusion of the Court*, (United State District Court, Southern District of California, Central Division, February 18, 1946), 11, accessed February 12, 2023, <https://mendezetalvwestminster.com/family-home-pages/>.

in the 1890s in the United States. His background as a Catholic and member of the Knights of Columbus would guide his decision in 1946 as he became one of the most important federal judges in Los Angeles during the first half of the 20th century. At the end of the *Mendez* trial, Mendez's family attorney, David C. Marcus, declared to the Spanish newspaper *La Opinion*, "This has been one of the biggest judicial decisions in favor of democratic practices granted since the emancipation of the slaves."⁸

The Respectable Life of Paul J. McCormick

Paul J. McCormick's birth in 1879 came at a historically unprecedented time. European economic collapse contrasted with the surge in rapid industrialization occurring in the United States. Employment opportunities increased migration to America, drawing laborers to large cities like New York, America's most prominent immigration gateway. As the post-Civil War period receded, oil, steel, and railway industries marked the Gilded Age with expansion into the West. The United States attracted non-Protestant European immigrants like the Irish Catholics. By 1884, Judge McCormick's—Irish Catholic—family had emigrated to Colorado, where his father, Daniel Joseph McCormick, sought employment in the mines. The McCormicks had taken their place among the multitude of immigrants who envisioned the West as holding the promise of a better life.

The McCormick family were devout Catholics who provided their children with a religious education from an early age. When Paul J. McCormick's family arrived in California, he received a public high school education in San Diego between 1887 to 1890. He then spent one year with the Marist Fathers at Hallows College in Salt Lake City, Utah, and continued his studies at St. Ignatius College in San Francisco. By 1900, he joined the California state bar after working as an assistant librarian at the Los Angeles County Law Library. At that time, McCormick

⁸ "Termina la Segregacion," *La Opinion*, Mar 22, 1947.

worked with his brother, Aloysius, in private practice. By 1905, his public service life began when he was appointed assistant district attorney in Los Angeles. Five years later, in 1910, Paul J. McCormick was appointed to the bench of the superior court by Republican Governor James Gillette (1860-1937).⁹

McCormick's private life reflected a religious devotion and humanity towards the most vulnerable in Los Angeles. In 1902, at the age of 23 years old, McCormick established the first chapter of the Knights of Columbus in Los Angeles. Originally founded by Father Michael J. McGivney (1852-1890) in 1882, the Knights of Columbus promoted social justice and defense of religious freedom in response to the rise of anti-Catholicism. Subsequently, the participation of Catholic laymen increased in this national fraternal organization throughout the United States. Active as a Fourth Degree Knight, McCormick supported the fraternity helping Catholics in the poorest neighborhoods of southern California. The Knights of Columbus fought the Progressive Era nativist and nationalist ideology embedded in the anti-Catholic rhetoric of the early twentieth century during the Progressive Era.¹⁰

By the 1900s, a Protestant majority replaced the Catholic population that lived in the city before 1848. Although the Our Lady Queen of Angels Church in the plaza was the most representative place of Catholicism and Mexican heritage, the Protestant Anglo immigrants began to arrive in the city with the need to celebrate their church services. By 1850, the Episcopalians were established in Los Angeles, and the first Protestant sermon

⁹ George Cosgrove, *Early California Justice: The History of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California* (San Francisco, 1958) 79-80; "Governor Names Two New Judges," *Los Angeles Herald* July 27, 1910; "Judge Paul J. McCormick," *The Tidings*, August 5, 1910, 12; St. Ignatius was a private Jesuit Academy. Today, it is the University of San Francisco.

¹⁰ Peter T. Convy, *Seventy Years of Service, 1902-1972: History of Knights of Columbus in California* (Los Angeles:1972): 232-233. The Fourth Degree is the highest degree of the order. The primary purpose is to encourage active Catholic citizenship and leadership with other members.

ever was preached in the city.¹¹ The American expansion to the West not only created a racial change in the population of Los Angeles but a religious one as well. Catholic immigrants from Europe reached places like Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles, increasing the population in the United States by as many as twenty-five million between 1865 to 1915.¹² This alarmed Protestants who were looking for any scapegoat to blame Catholics for social or economic problems. By the 1890s, xenophobia, and anti-Catholicism increased due to malicious propaganda and rumors against immigrants, considering them soldiers of the Pope and Rome's emissaries who intended to conquer America and impose their religion. Race was not only an imposed category but also an embraced identity for new immigrants, including Catholics.¹³ Historian David R. Roediger notes that "early in the twentieth century, it was by no means clear that those immigrants from southern and eastern Europe would escape the condemnations of white supremacists."¹⁴ Certain Protestants believed the Catholic clergy was to blame for the Irish not adapting to American society and their reluctant hostility to public education. For middle-class Americans, the Irish were inferior because they were poor and rowdy; however, by the end of the 1800s, Irish immigrants were able to assimilate into American society, becoming a powerful political force in the United States.

In the city of Los Angeles, Catholics were a minority, and opening a chapter of the Knights of Columbus united the few

¹¹ Boyle Workman, *The City That Grew*. Los Angeles: The Southland Publishing Co., (1936), 53; Michael E. Engh, S.J. *Frontier Faiths: Church, Temple, and Synagogue in Los Angeles, 1846-1888*, (Albuquerque: the University of New Mexico Press, 1992) 32; William D. Estrada, *The Los Angeles Plaza: Sacred and Contested Space*. (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2008), 83.

¹² Jay P. Dolan, *In Search of an American Catholicism: A History of Religion and Culture in Tension*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 90.

¹³ David R. Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White: The Strange Journey from Ellis Island to the Suburbs*, (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2006), 53.

¹⁴ Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness*, 93.

Catholic men in the town. Paul J. McCormick, with his lifelong friend, attorney Joseph Scott (1867-1958), established Los Angeles Council 621 in order to defend religious freedom and discrimination against Catholics. By 1902, when the young lawyer Paul J. McCormick began his professional career, his social and religious work began within the Catholic fraternity.¹⁵ In 1910, the Catholic magazine, *The Tidings*, highlighted, “There shall be no discrimination in political matters by reason of a man’s religious affiliation.”¹⁶ After an outstanding career in private practice, McCormick was appointed the assistant district attorney for Los Angeles County in 1905. His reputation as a just and upright man gave him fame and prestige within the community and not only within the religious sphere but also the professional sphere. In 1910, at the age of thirty-one, his professional career improved when he was appointed to the Superior Court for Los Angeles County by the Republican governor of California, James Norris Gillett (1860-1937).¹⁷ McCormick stressed how, as an openly religious man, he had obtained a position on the Superior Court. When he was appointed to the Superior Court in Los Angeles, *The Tidings* magazine noted, “We recognize that no man should expect political recognition simply because he is Catholic, but we believe it is equally true that no man should be discriminated against because he is Catholic”¹⁸ Beyond being a member of the Knights of Columbus and devout Catholic, Judge McCormick had earned a reputation as a just and honorable judge.

Throughout his time as a Los Angeles attorney, Paul J. McCormick engaged in social activism with the Knights of Columbus and the Brownson Settlement House. Influenced by the progressive movement and Pope Leon XIII’s encyclical, *Rerum*

¹⁵ Peter T. Convy, *Seventy Years of Service, 1902-1972: History of Knights of Columbus in California* (Los Angeles:1972):232-233. Attorney Joseph Scott became one of the most important attorneys in California. He became president of the Los Angeles City Board of Education in 1904.

¹⁶ *The Tiding*, August 5, 1910, 11.

¹⁷ “Governor Names Two New Judges”, *Los Angeles Herald*, July 27, 1910, 2.

¹⁸ *The Tiding*, August 5, 1910, 11.

Novarum, published in 1891, which aimed to establish societies that reach everyone insofar as it pursues the common good; and where everyone participates and calls parishioners to take a social attitude in the world.

Young Catholics, men, and women heeded the call of the Holy Father to attend to social justice among Catholics and non-Catholics. Society must be united with each other to constitute a nation or a community.¹⁹ At the Brownson Settlement House, the first Catholic settlement house in California, McCormick assisted Mary J. Workman and a group of young Catholic women who provided social work, public health, education, and job training to poor immigrants in Los Angeles. McCormick noted, “I believe two greatest causes of crime are environment and maleducation.”²⁰

The Brownson House had an open library with reading groups and activities that encouraged education in English and Spanish. The promotion of education and reading sought to create equality in education from which minorities were segregated. Public schools in Los Angeles separated Mexican students from other students and tried to demonstrate their inferiority by emphasizing manual labor and domestic training for low-paying jobs. Their classrooms were filled with underqualified teachers, and the schools were in poorly equipped, substandard facilities. Indeed, the schools’ physical and intellectual spaces became as segregated as the students. Mexican and Mexican American students could not climb economically in society, building a class of inequality due to reinforced, systematic racism that was found in the classroom. Language, hygiene, and special needs of Mexican students were mentioned as the main reasons for the practice of segregation. Once Mexican schools existed, advocates believed

¹⁹ Vatican, Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum: Encyclical Di Leone XIII Sulla Questione Operaia*. Lugano Edizione a cura dell’Organizzazione cristiano-sociale del canton Ticino per la celebrazione del LXX, 1961. accessed, July 2021, https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum.html

²⁰ Paul J. McCormick, “The Adult Delinquency and the Judiciary System of California.” *The Recorder*, July 22, 1916, 5.

that traditional education was not possible for Mexicans. In their eyes, they lived in an environment of poverty, poor housing and sanitation, health problems, mental defects, and unemployment. Mexicans were educated to serve and work in factories.²¹

By the 1910s, the number of immigrants who reached the doors of Brownson Settlement House increased due to the Mexican Revolution. During the Progressive Era, the anti-immigrant surge increased along with the anti-Catholicism ideology from the nativist and eugenicist promoters. By 1913, Mexicans were blamed for the nation's economic crisis and unemployment in the city of Los Angeles. By 1917, with the First World War and the Russian and Mexican revolutions, the fear of foreigners increased with the spread of Anarchism and Socialism in the United States. Supporters of the Brownson Settlement House believed Mexicans were followers of the anarchist ideology propagated in the city by the *Partido Liberal Mexicano* (PLM) and the *Magonistas*. The U.S. increased the Americanization of immigrant communities. Paul J. McCormick supported the Brownson House by giving his approval to social work and giving conferences to raise funds. He emphasized the Americanization done at the Settlement House, noting, "Brownson House, in my opinion, has done more to make Mexican good citizens than any other agency in our community. Its Americanization work alone should appeal to all patriots."²² McCormick believed, as Workman stated, "Americanization is a reciprocal process in both gives and takes. It can never be brought about by force, or by spasmodic effort." An example of mutual understanding of culture was published on August 29, 1919, in *The Tidings* newspaper about the indigenous Mexican festival held at Brownson House. The bilingual festivity of both Spanish and English highlighted the Mexican indigenous culture and tradition. Mary J. Workman noted, "Americanization is preeminently dependent upon the exemplification of American ideals by native-

²¹ David Torres-Rouff, "Becoming Mexican: Segregated Schools and Social Scientists in Southern California, 1913–1946." *Southern California Quarterly* 94, no. 1 (2012): 91–127.

²² *The Tidings*, March 29, 1918.

born Americans, and upon conditions which he creates. After all, it is the native-born citizen who determines conditions of entrance into America, and conditions of life and labor in America.”²³ Judge McCormick witnessed social work taking place at the house, allowed learning from the foreigner, and provided them the education, health, and job training to succeed in the United States. In his endorsement, McCormick remarked, “Every true American will support Brownson House because it makes better Americans.”²⁴

Mary J. Workman noticed that the failure to Americanize the parents of immigrant children was caused by the large number of families living in the same household. Their housing conditions reflected the racial inequality due to labor exploitation and lack of opportunities in the city. She wrote that,

The educational work it does consist in the upholding of the best standard of American living and citizenship in the preservation of the best traditions of the immigrant as foundation for the work of Americanization; in friendly interpretation, in encouragement, and where knowledge and skill are lacking and helplessness is manifest, in neighborly assistance toward the acquaint of needed information, skill and experience and in the securing protection against exploitation.²⁵

The city began de facto segregation when restitutions in housing developed in the mid-1910s. Housing restrictions defined the social conditions that characterized the Eastside of Los Angeles as

²³ Brownson House: A Centre of Americanization, *The Tidings*, 48.

²⁴ *The Tidings*, June 6, 1919.

²⁵ “Brownson House: a Social Service Center,” *The Tidings*, 1916. During the 1910s, the Flores Magon Brothers and the Mexican Liberal Party (PLM) were spreading anarchist ideology and revolutionary rhetoric within the Mexican community in Los Angeles. They tried to collect volunteers to invade Mexico and raise funds to keep their fight during the Mexican Revolution.

non-white territory²⁶ Their housing was in deplorable conditions. They lived in extreme poverty with a lack of jobs, health services, and education. Each house contained up to twenty people, and up to seven slept in one bedroom.²⁷

In 1917, the new Bishop of Los Angeles, Joseph J. Cantwell (1874-1947), had a warm welcome to the Brownson House, along with progressive Catholics like Mary J. Workman, Paul J. McCormick, and San Francisco Archbishop Edward J. Hannah (1860-1944). Archbishop Edward Hannah's service in California as a mediator with workers and immigrants was much admired during his archbishopric from 1915 to 1935. Bishop Hannah believed that "immigrants would assimilate more rapidly and completely when attention was given to the needs of individuals."²⁸ At the reception for the new bishop replacing Bishop Hannah, Paul J. McCormick discussed the problem of juvenile delinquency on the streets of Los Angeles. As McCormick defined it, the social environment and the lack of education led young people toward criminality. In the Brownson Settlement House, they understood that the best way to keep young people

²⁶ George J. Sanchez, *Boyle Heights: How a Los Angeles Neighborhood Became the Future of American Democracy*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2021),10.

²⁷ Immigrant Education Leaflet 3, Commission of Immigration and Housing of California, Series 2, Box 4, Folder 24, Workman Research Materials, CSLA-35, 232.

²⁸ Richard, Gribble, CSC, "Social Catholicism Engages the American State", *Journal of Church and State*; Autumn 2000; 42, 4; Academic Research Library pg. 737 Richard Gribble, "Advocate for Immigrants: The Church and State Career of Archbishop Edward J. Hanna." (Southern California Quarterly 83, no. 3, 2001): 295. In 1919, Hannah was chosen as the first chairman of the National Catholic Welfare Council (NCWC) by the United States bishops where he challenged immigration laws reuniting families and helping Catholic priests and religious nuns who sought to escape persecution during the Cristero War in Mexico.

away from crime was through social activities, education, and mutual understanding and respect for the culture of foreigners.²⁹

The pinnacle of the Brownson House was in March of 1916 when Mary J. Workman opened the doors to organize the *Liga Mutualista Mexicana* (the Mexican Mutualist League). Fifteen Mexicans (eleven men and four women) approached Mary J. Workman for assistance and cooperation from the Brownson House Association to create a Mexican social association. Inspired by the teaching of the *Rerum Novarum* encyclical that encouraged the society to be united with each other to constitute a community, Workman and McCormick worked alongside the young Mexicans to organize *La Liga*. She noted, “He [McCormick] understands better than anyone here the larger aims of the work. He is the most prominent citizen as well as Catholic.”³⁰ One of the goals of the *Liga Mutualista* was to improve the living conditions of Mexicans, such as housing and child education. “Mexican representatives showed a keen knowledge of the handicaps which oppressed their people and made a thoughtful analysis of the public sentiment of the community in their regard.”³¹

By 1920, after nineteen years, Mary J. Workman left the Brownson Settlement Association presidency when Bishop Cantwell began centralizing Catholic charities in Los Angeles. Judge McCormick praised Workman’s leadership in the Brownson Settlement House, “There are hundreds and perhaps thousands of persons who have been made good citizens and practical Christians because of your personal zeal and Christian charity.”³² In 1926, Pope Pius XI bestowed the *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice* (For the Church and Pope) Medal upon Mary J. Workman for her charitable

²⁹ “Mary’s Letter,” *Golden Friendship Letters of Friendship, Travel and General Interest*. Edited by Sister Mary Leopold, Sister of the Holy Names, New York, Louis Carrier Co., 1929. Serie 2, box 3 and folder 1, Workman Research Materials, CSLA-35, 251.

³⁰ “Mary’s Letters,” 274

³¹ Clementina De Forrest Griffin, *The Tidings*, March 1917.

³² Paul J. McCormick to Mary J. Workman, February 27, 1920. Jose Castro, “Mary Julia Workman: Catholic Progressivism 1900-1920,” MA. Thesis in History, (California State University, San Bernardino, 2022), 188.

missionary and social work in Los Angeles.³³ Workman provided, as McCormick described it, “unselfish work to the community.” Their friendship and support lasted for years. Workman and McCormick had a progressive mindset, and their faith encouraged the pursuit of justice. During the most important case at the beginning of his career as a federal judge, he thanked Workman for her support, noting, “You will never know how much your encouragement has meant to me and mine especially through the long and sometimes discouraging days since Elk Hills case was decided.”³⁴



Figure 1: Judge Paul J. McCormick, Mendez, et al. v. Westminster, et al. Box 3, F.5. Chapman University, Frank Mt. Pleasant Library of Special Collections and Archives

³³ Pope Honors Holy Names Graduate for Welfare Work, *The Tidings*, November 23, 1926, Series 1: Mary Julia Workman Box 1, Folder 3, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.

³⁴ Paul J. McCormick to Mary J. Workman, October 17, 1927.

The Knights, the Klan, and Corruption In the United States

The roaring twenties, the decade of jazz culture, and alcohol prohibition imposed by progressive conservatives went hand in hand with consumerism and capitalism. It was also the decade of the racist renaissance in the United States with the rise of the Ku Klux Klan, and the decade of a corrupt United States government. It was the 1920s when print media and radio began to reveal the most significant corruption case uncovered in United States politics that gave Judge Paul J. McCormick an essential role in the so-called Teapot Dome Scandal with the Elk Hills case in California.

On February 7, 1924, McCormick was nominated by Republican President Calvin Coolidge (1872-1933) as a judge on the Federal Court for the Southern District of California. By February 11, 1924, he was confirmed by the U.S. Senate.³⁵ The professional promotion of McCormick would be put to the test the following year. On May 25, 1925, Judge Paul J. McCormick favored the United States in the corruption case against Edward L. Doheny (1856-1935) and Albert B. Fall (1861-1944). He canceled the contracts at Elk Hills Naval Field in California with the Pan-American Petroleum company due to the \$100,000 transaction received by Fall from Doheny, which according to the court, “contain every element of bribe.”³⁶ Besides receiving money from Doheny, Albert Fall received money from Harry F. Sinclair (1876-1956). In this case, the Teapot Dome Scandal ended with a bribery charge of nine months of a one-year sentence against Albert B. Fall in 1929.³⁷

³⁵ *The Tidings*, 15 Feb 1924, Fri, 19

³⁶ *Arizona Republic*, May 29, 1925.

³⁷ Albert Fall was appointed Secretary of the Interior by President Warren G. Harding in March 1921. “The Bribery Trial Acquittal of Edward L. Doheny, December 1926,” *Homestead Museum Blog*, Paul R. Spitzzeri, December 29, 2018, accessed, January 29, 2023.

Being a close friend of Bishop Cantwell, Edward L. Doheny would be one of the benefactors of the Catholic Church in Los Angeles. However, Doheny's close relationship with the Catholic Church did not influence the decision from Judge McCormick, who was a member of the Knights of Columbus and Cantwell's friend. Surprisingly, in the middle of his corruption trial, in April 1925, Doheny and Cantwell dedicated Saint Vincent de Paul's church in Los Angeles. Doheny attempted to influence McCormick's decision with his altruism and charity to the church like a "religious shield." Doheny used the church to change the public's perspective toward him during his trial. Cantwell used Doheny's money to increase church assets in what would become the largest diocese in the United States. Regarding the influence within the Catholic Church and the friendship with Bishop Cantwell, Judge McCormick declared that Doheny bribed the Secretary of Interior Albert B. Fall with 100,000 dollars.³⁸ As a result, Judge McCormick gained prestige within the federal justice system for not becoming influenced by a false facade of religious altruism and not interposing his beliefs over the constitutional laws of the United States.

Meanwhile, during this same time, post-revolutionary religious persecution escalated in Mexico. As the leader of the Catholic Church in southern California, Bishop John J. Cantwell (1874-1947) actively harbored hundreds of Catholic refugees who came fleeing the violence in Mexico. Besides the social work with the Mexican Immigrants, Bishop Cantwell worked to expand both social work and evangelism by building churches and schools across southern California. This included fifteen churches in the Inland Empire, San Bernardino, and Riverside. In 1925, a church was built in the heart of the Mexican *colonia* or community. It became the people's meeting place, as a symbol of religious unity

<https://homesteadmuseum.blog/2018/12/29/the-bribery-trial-acquittal-of-edward-l-doheny-december-1926/>

³⁸ Margaret Leslie Davis. *Dark Side of Fortune: Triumph and Scandal in the Life of Oil Tycoon Edward L. Doheny* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 184, 188, 215. Weber, 495.

among the Catholics, and the church was dedicated on the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe (December 12th) while they sheltered priests who were victims of religious persecution arriving from Mexico during the *Cristero War* like Father Jose Nunez who fled from Zacatecas. From this trench, they challenged the government of the president, Plutarco Elias Calles (1877-1945), and his anti-religious ideology by planning a religious procession in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe to demonstrate to the Mexican consul the strength of the Mexicans in the United States. Priests like Father Jose Nunez communicated to parishioners about the social situation in Mexico and the United States, creating a social unit of mutual aid in the Mexican *colonia* that would be reflected in the pursuit of social equality and civil rights two decades later.³⁹ In the 1920s, the community began a relationship that helped to defend against systematic oppression and discrimination in the United States from all types of anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic groups, such as the Ku Klux Klan.

The success achieved by the Klan was found in propaganda and rallies, including misinformation and nationalist rhetoric in newspapers and pamphlets. In 1915, after the film *The Birth of a Nation*, the second Ku Klux Klan was founded in Atlanta, Georgia. This film was screened for Democratic president Woodrow Wilson (1856-1924) at the White House, giving a perception of acceptance in the highest sector of politics in the United States. The *Los Angeles Evening Post* newspaper featured a story about the Klan's plan to expand into California.⁴⁰ The Klan would significantly influence Southern California, taking over government sectors and

³⁹ Mark Ocegueda, *Sol y Sombra: San Bernardino's Mexican Community, 1880-1960*, (Doctoral Dissertation, The University of California, Irvine, 2017), 103.

⁴⁰ Jack Carberry, "Ku Klux Klan to Invade the West," *Los Angeles Evening Post-Record*, 03 Dec 1920, 12. Ku Klux Klan Demonstration Witnessed by 5,000 Persons, *The Pomona Progress Bulletin*, 25 June 1924, 6. Their racial superiority over other minorities was evident in his propaganda and hate speeches attracting new members in the West. In a rally of 5000 persons dressed in their white-robed clothes at Ganesha Park in Pomona, California, the official Klan lecturer said, "The Ku Klux Klan is nothing more or less than a white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant, native-born patriotic fraternity."

school districts. In Orange County, California, the most important chapter of the Klan attracted members with anti-Catholic propaganda and fear in society with anti-immigrant rhetoric.⁴¹ Meanwhile, Paul J. McCormick worked with his friend Joseph Scott to add more members to the Knights of Columbus to fight against the Klan bigotry in Southern California.

As the leader of the Knights of Columbus, Joseph Scott did not hesitate to go to the southern states and tell the Klan “to get out of their nightshirts if they were 100 percent American!”⁴² In Orange County, the main opponents of the Klan were united to fight against the Klan’s propaganda. The local chapter of the Knights of Columbus group, Father Patrick Browne of St. Boniface’s Catholic Church in Anaheim, and a coalition of citizens weakened the Ku Klux Klan movement. At a 5,000-person rally in Fullerton, the Klan lecturer stated, “the ‘alien influence’ as the primary cause of America’s difficulties.” The Klan wanted to limit immigration and public education provided by native-born Protestant teachers.⁴³ By 1921, the Ku Klux Klan infiltrated school districts, and the “Mexican School” was completed, with segregation of Mexican schoolchildren becoming the norm throughout Southern California.⁴⁴ Roy S. Horton, a Klan member, became a trustee of the Santa Ana Unified School District in the 1920s. He and Marshall Keeler, another Klan member, threatened Santa Ana teachers to join the Klan. Horton claimed that the Klan was gaining control of boards of education across the United States. Although segregation in schools began before the arrival of

⁴¹ *KKK Pamphlet*, Leo Friis Archives, 1948-04-05 - 2009-07-28, box: 33, Folder 1, CSUF University Archives & Special Collections.

⁴² Anita Weyer, “Joseph Scott: A Life of Service” *Southern California Quarterly*, Vol. 48, No. 3 (September 1966), pp. 241-264

⁴³ Richard Melching, “The Activities of the Ku Klux Klan In Anaheim, California 1923-1925”, *Southern California Quarterly*, Vol. 56, No. 2 (1974), pp. 175-196

⁴⁴ Jesse La Tour, “A Brief History of the Ku Klux Klan in Orange County: Notes on the Banality of Evil,” *Fullerton Observer*, (January 7, 2019), accessed February 15, 2023, <https://fullertonobserver.com/2019/01/07/a-brief-history-of-the-ku-klux-klan-in-orange-county-notes-on-the-banality-of-evil/>

the Klan in Southern California, their ideology reinforced anti-Catholicism and discrimination against Mexicans.⁴⁵ One of the Klan's goals was to influence education and, above all, obtain seats on different Boards of Education. In their pamphlet, *The Public School Problem in America*, published in 1928, the Klan writes, "If this country continues to be flooded by inferior peoples whose assimilation is impossible, the task of enlightened advancement will be hopeless."⁴⁶ For the Klan, foreigners were illiterate and could not learn, adapt, and serve the country because they brought backwardness.

Meanwhile, in 1929, due to the stock market crash and the economic depression, President Herbert Hoover (1874-1964) had an urgency to solve the problems of the Great Depression and, with the creation of The National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement—Wickersham Commission—to evaluate the prohibition of alcohol established in 1919 with the Eighteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. Paul J. McCormick was a member of this commission.

⁴⁵ Gustavo Arellano, "Ask a Mexican", *OC Weekly*, (March 8, 2011), accessed January 12, 2023, <https://www.ocweekly.com/category/newsask-a-mexican/page/32>. Beginning in 1922, The Klan successfully influenced education policy to create segregated schools and separate facilities in all three neighborhoods. The Klan's interest in directing many aspects of civil life reacted to the growing Mexican community influencing anti-Catholicism and promoting white supremacy. See Robert Clearly, *The Ku Klux Klan and their Influence on the Education of Mexicans in Kansas City, Kansas, 1922-1925*. (Syracuse University, 2021) 1. By the 1920s, several states tried to force Catholic schoolchildren out of parochial schools and into public ones. In Oregon, where Klan members were part of the board of education, they pushed the governor to pass the Oregon School Law requiring all children to attend public school through eighth grade. Parents could not choose where to send their children to school, and, with the help of the Knights, they sued the state of Oregon over this law in the Supreme Court. The law was overruled unanimously in 1925. See <https://www.kofc.org/en/news-room/columbia/2017/november/knights-vs-the-klan.html>

⁴⁶*The Public School Problem in America*, Leo Friis Archives, 1948-04-05 - 2009-07-28, box: 33, Folder 1, CSUF University Archives & Special Collections. 5.

Contrary to the wealthy conservative Catholics who supported prohibition, in 1931, he wrote his conclusion criticizing the ban's effects on American society. He supported the repeal of prohibition due to the adverse effects, stating, "There has been developed such a widespread spirit of lawlessness and hypocrisy, unprecedented disrespect for authority that in fairness and candor."⁴⁷



Figure 2: Left to Right- I. Henry Harris, Jr., I. Henry Harris, Sr., Francis D. Tappaan, Joseph Scott, Cuthbert Scott, Paul D. McCormick, A.I. McCormick, and United States District Judge Paul J. McCormick. Los Angeles, 1932, UCLA Charles E. Young Research Library Department of Special Collections, A1713 Young Research Library

The Long Path to Desegregation in California.

After the December 7, 1941, attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States government began detaining Japanese and Japanese Americans in relocation camps. One of the families detained and

⁴⁷ National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement, *Report, June 7, 1931*, 273. accessed Jan 7, 2023, <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/Digitization/44540NCJRS.pdf>

sent from Orange County was the Munemitsus, farmers in Westminster. Gonzalo and Felicitas Mendez owned a cafe in Santa Ana, California, and when they leased the Munemitsus farm, they moved their family. The Mendezes were American citizens; Gonzalo was from Michoacan, Mexico, and his wife, Felicitas, was from Puerto Rico.

As parents, education was important for their children. Since they were in a new neighborhood, they attempted to enroll their children in a school closer to their new home. The conflict began when the school district denied them admittance to Westminster Elementary School and sent them to Hoover Elementary School. The Mendezes realized that Mexicans were sent to schools in poor conditions and far away. All school districts in Orange County, such as Garden Grove, Santa Ana, Modena, and Westminster, were similar. The Mendezes met with several citizens affected by these school district policies. Together they hired a civil law attorney, David C. Marcus, to file a lawsuit in federal court in Los Angeles presided by Judge Paul J. McCormick.⁴⁸

David C. Marcus was a son of immigrant Jews who had the opportunity to study at the University of Southern California (USC) law school. While other schools rejected applications from Jewish students, USC opened its doors to inclusion. Marcus experienced anti-Semitism on campus from other students. In Los Angeles during the early 20th century, Jews were subject to exclusion from elite clubs, government positions, and housing. The Mexican Consulate hired Marcus due to the lack of Mexican American lawyers. Private bar associations excluded Jewish lawyers, and for this reason, Marcus decided to work for the Consulate, where he met his wife, Yrma Maria Davila, a Mexican immigrant who had arrived in the late-1920s. They were regularly excluded from housing tracts as a multiracial family by racially restrictive covenants. Remarkably, as a young lawyer, David C.

⁴⁸ Strum, "Our Children Are Americans," 9.

Marcus earned his first civil legal victory by winning the *Doss v. Bernal* case in the town of Fullerton, Orange County, in 1943.⁴⁹

In the 1940s, Fullerton was a growing city in southern California. After being a KKK stronghold, most of the population were white protestant families who came to inhabit these suburban residences. During WWII, Alex and Esther Bernal had access to the down payment on their house without imagining they would be victims of discrimination by racially restrictive covenants. The Bernals hired civil law attorney David C. Marcus to prevent an eviction from their home and fight their neighbors' harassment. Marcus' first victory was on September 18, 1943, when Superior Court Judge Albert F. Ross ruled in favor of the Bernals and against the discrimination done by the covenants in Fullerton. In this case, Marcus called A. O. Bowden, a professor of anthropology at the University of Southern California, to prove his argument. Marcus argued that the restrictions were invalid because Mexicans were Caucasian and, therefore could not be segregated by race.⁵⁰

That summer, three hundred people gathered at the church of Our Lady of Guadalupe in San Bernardino. Invited by Father Jose Nunez, Gonzalo Valles began to talk about his experience in the city's public pool. The crowded church listened attentively to how his son, Mike Valles, was restricted from swimming in the Perris Hill Plunge. Father Jose Nunez declared, "The Catholic Church would not tolerate any forms of discrimination toward Mexicans, especially during a war where so many Mexican

⁴⁹ Genevieve Carpio, "Unexpected Allies: David C. Marcus and His Impact on the Advancement of Civil Rights in the Mexican-American Legal Landscape of Southern California." *In Beyond Alliances: The Jewish Role in Reshaping the Racial Landscape of Southern California*, edited by Bruce Zuckerman, George J. Sánchez, and Lisa Ansell, (Purdue University Press, 2012), 1-32.

⁵⁰ Robert Chao Romero and Luis Fernando Fernandez, "*Doss v. Bernal*: Ending Mexican Apartheid in Orange County," UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Report, no. 14 (2012), accessed March 2, 2023, <http://www.chicano.ucla.edu/files/RR14.pdf>

American men had died in the fighting abroad.”⁵¹ Previously, on June 2, 1943, the priest condemned the segregation of a war veteran, Juvenal Valles, which the Mountain View cemetery denied his burial because he was a Mexican descendant. With media pressure from the Spanish newspaper *El Espectador* and the Catholic Church’s support, including the intervention of U.S. Congressman Harry Sheppard (1885-1969), Juvenal’s family buried him in the cemetery. Father Jose Nunez used his church pulpit to express his political opinions to the parishioners and invited them to participate actively in their community. The Catholic Church’s social work, along with *Liga Mutualista* and civic groups such as *Confederación de Sociedades Mexicanas*, were crucial in supporting a formal complaint of discrimination against the city of San Bernardino. The Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe assemblies summoned hundreds of Mexican people looking for a solution to the injustice perpetrated against minorities. On September 17, the leaders, Father Nuñez, Eugenio Nogueras, Ignacio López, and their attorney, David C. Marcus, appeared before federal court Judge León R. Yankwich demanding the end of segregation in public pools in San Bernardino in the *Lopez v. Seccombe* case.

According to Mayor William Seccombe, the city restrained the admission of Mexicans due to insufficient hygiene. To prove the discrimination against Mexicans, Father Nunez took three clean and well-dressed children to the pool to witness how the authorities denied access to them. Father Nunez was a community leader in the plaintiffs’ committee, and from the pulpit of the church, Father Nunez gave the news to the parishioners about the case during mass.⁵² Judge Yankwich, a Loyola Law School

⁵¹ Ocegueda, *Sol y Sombra: San Bernardino’s Mexican Community, 1880-1960*, 111

⁵² Strum, “Our Children Are Americans,” 13., Mark Ocegueda, “Lopez v. Seccombe: The City of San Bernardino’s Mexican American Defense Committee and Its Role in Regional and National Desegregation,” (History in the Making: Vol. 3, 2010) 4,141 Available at: <https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/history-in-the-making/vol3/iss1/4>

graduate, ruled in favor of the plaintiffs. David C. Marcus won his second civil rights victory in southern California when the Mendez family hired him in Orange County, where he would face the most decisive and crucial legal challenge against systemic racism and white supremacy.

On March 2, 1945, the trial against four Orange County school districts began in the Superior Court. This trial has been underestimated in the history of the United States; at the same time, it has been minimized to recognize how Mexicans suffered from racial segregation, oppression, and racism in the United States. The preamble to the civil rights fight began with the decision of Judge Paul J. McCormick in California. David C. Marcus's strategy was to find a loophole when *Plessy V. Ferguson* declared that separate but equal facilities were constitutional. He noticed that California education law allowed segregation of Native Americans and Asian students, but not Mexicans, since this minority group is considered white. As Phillipa Strum noted, "(Marcus) would claim that the Mendez case was not about race at all."⁵³ Almost a year after starting *Mendez v. Westminster*, on March 21, 1946, Judge McCormick declared the segregation of Mexican and Latino students in the Orange County school districts as unconstitutional. On December 10, 1946, Joel Ogle, the attorney for Orange County, appealed the decision in the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco.

Although they refused to overrule *Plessy v. Ferguson*, on April 14, 1947, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals confirmed the McCormick decision. By June 14, 1947, the Republican Governor of California, Earl Warren, signed a law to repeal California's school segregation.

⁵³ Strum, "Our Children Are Americans," 13.



Figure 3: David Marcus. *Mendez, et al. v. Westminster, et al.* Box 3, F.5. Chapman University, Frank Mt. Pleasant Library of Special Collections and Archives

Judge McCormick's decision began serious civil rights lawsuits in other states such as Texas and Arizona. In 1947, *Delgado v. Bastrop Independent School District* ended the state-mandated segregation of all Mexican American children in Texas, and, in 1951, in Arizona, a Federal Court judge, in the *Gonzales v. Sheely* lawsuit, ruled in favor of desegregation in schools. These civil lawsuits used what Judge McCormick emphasized, "if these children were retarded in English, it was because of the conditions under which they were taught"⁵⁴ The educational quality was lower in the Mexican communities creating a sense of inferiority in a society marked by systematic racism placing them below their Anglo counterparts.

⁵⁴ Carey McWilliams, "Is Your Name Gonzalez?" *The Nation*, April 8, 1947, 302. *Mendez, et al. v. Westminster, et al.* Archive, Robbie Records, 2009.067.r. Box 3, F.5. Chapman University, Frank Mt. Pleasant Library of Special Collections and Archives

The American Jewish Congress, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) united with the Lawyers Guild, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), and the Japanese American Citizens' League in writing briefs to the Ninth Circuit Court in San Francisco, California, to defend the appeal from the school districts of Orange County. In a letter written to NAACP lawyer Thurgood Marshall (1908-1993) from Carl Murphy (1889-1967), an African-American journalist and civil rights activist, Murphy recalled the point used by the American Jewish Congress in the *Mendez case*:

Whenever a group, considered as "inferior" by the prevailing standards of a community, is segregated by the official action from the socially dominant group, the very fact of official segregation, whether or not 'equal' physical facilities are being furnished to both groups, is a humiliating and discriminatory denial of equality to the group considered "inferior" and a violation of the Constitution of the United States of treaties duly entered into under its authority⁵⁵

The governor of California was able to read the decision written by Judge McCormick and thus signed a law that ended segregation. Earl Warren was a Republican governor elected in 1942. By June 1947, Warren made school segregation illegal in California.⁵⁶ On September 30, 1953, amid the most important civil rights movement case, *Brown v. Board of Education*, President Dwight D. Eisenhower appointed Earl Warren Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court. On May 17, 1954, Warren's ruling in the *Brown* case echoed Judge McCormick's decision in the *Mendez* case. "[Education] is required in the

⁵⁵ Carl Murphy to Mr. Thurgood Marshall, December 5, 1946, Mendez, et al. v. Westminster, et al. Archive, Robbie Records, 2009.067.r. Box 3, F.5. Chapman University, Frank Mt. Pleasant Library of Special Collections and Archives

⁵⁶ Shaw, "Foreshadowing Brown v. Board," 12.

performance of our most basic public responsibilities, even service in the armed forces. It is the very foundation of good citizenship. Today, it is a principal instrument in awakening the child to cultural values.”⁵⁷

With his experience from previous civil trials before *Mendez*, attorney David C. Marcus filed the lawsuit at the federal court, where Judge McCormick asked him to have sufficient evidence in this case. Paul J. McCormick was a fair judge and was honest in his verdicts. In 1923, when pronouncing his first death sentence, he felt the pain of sentencing a prisoner to death by hanging. Judge McCormick stated that he would not want such cases because his human and religious beliefs had to be set aside to practice law. He declared, “a man with any religion must feel awful, tremendous responsibility of such task.”⁵⁸ He wanted enough evidence to avoid the prisoner’s death penalty or some flaw in the law to use and change the sentence. McCormick’s fairness in court decisions expressed the need for sufficient evidence to render a favorable verdict. During the pre-trial, it is for that reason; he wanted to know if Marcus would present a reasonable argument for a strong case so he could render a verdict in his favor as he noted, “if children are segregated solely and exclusively because of their ancestry or lineage, that it is an unlawful discriminatory act on the part of the school authorities.”⁵⁹ Marcus argued, “We are prepared to show that they speak English and Spanish prior to attending school and that the only discriminatory practice is not because of any linguistic qualifications, but because they are of Spanish descent.”⁶⁰ Since it was a federal court, Judge McCormick emphasized in the pre-trial that since it was not a case about segregation based on race,

⁵⁷ Frederick P. Aguirre. *Mendez V. Westminster School District: How It Affected Brown v. Board of Education.* Journal of Hispanic Higher Education 4, no. 4 (2005): 321–332.

⁵⁸ Alma Whitaker, “Death Penalty Brings Emotion”, *Los Angeles Times*, April 8, 1923, 11.

⁵⁹ *Mendez v. Westminster Pre-trial Transcripts*, (Los Angeles, June 26, 1945), 26

⁶⁰ *Pre-trial Transcripts*, 33

Marcus had to prove the segregation against Mexican descendants because of their language, culture, and social status. McCormick noted, “We have here a problem and the ultimate question would be what is meant by the same or equal facilities. That doesn’t simply mean the curriculum. It means social, in the sense that children are in a democratic environment, commingling with one another on an equal basis as far as nature has constituted individuals to be equal”⁶¹ It was noticeable from the pre-trial McCormick knew it would be the starting point to overthrow the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* court decision. The onset of the Progressive Era establishing segregation laws did not violate the U.S. Constitution as long as the facilities for each race were equal in quality, a doctrine that came to be known as “separate but equal.”

David C. Marcus developed the case by contacting parents and students who were victims of discrimination. Each gave their testimony in English, proving that Mexican children speak English perfectly and demonstrating fitness to study in school alongside white students. In the past, Judge McCormick had visited the Brownson Settlement House and understood how children read in English and Spanish. Their ability to read both languages did not make them more linguistically disabled, as the school district suggested. On July 11, 1946, Marcus called a professor from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), to the stand to prove his statement. Dr. Ralph L. Beals was Chairman of the Department of Anthropology, and his studies on indigenous communities in Mexico and the United States served to provide a scientific and social argument in the case.”⁶² Dr. Beals declared, “A feeling of antagonism is built up in children when they are segregated in this fashion. As a result of the segregation they become hostile to the whole culture of the surrounding majority group which appears to be, to them at least, discrimination.” Another important witness in the case was Marie H. Hughes, a

⁶¹ *Pre-trial Transcripts*, 108

⁶² *Mendez v. Westminster’ Trial Transcripts*, (Los Angeles, July 11, 1945), 676 & 686.

specialist in the education of minority groups. As a University of Chicago graduate, Hughes stated, “Children learn a language through hearing it and through having a motive, a reason, for using it.”⁶³

Since familiarizing himself with the Brownson Settlement House, McCormick believed the social environment was a determining factor in the educational development of children. Furthermore, he thought it was primarily harmful when segregated from the majority counterpart, which made them feel inferior. Mary J. Workman wrote that,

The educational work it does consist in the upholding of the best standard of American living and citizenship in the preservation of the best traditions of the immigrant as the foundation for the work of Americanization; in friendly interpretation, in encouragement, and where knowledge and skill are lacking and helplessness is manifest, in neighborly assistance toward the acquaint of needed information, skill, and experience and in the securing protection against exploitation.⁶⁴

Dr. Beal stated that “(segregation) would definitely retard the assimilation of the child to American customs and ways.”⁶⁵ Hughes concluded, “Segregation, by its very nature, is a reminder constantly of inferiority, of not being wanted, of not being a part of the community. Such an experience cannot possibly build the best personality or the sort of person who is most at home in the world, and able to contribute and live well.”⁶⁶

Apart from language, segregation was also due to stereotypes about Mexicans. Rhetoric promoted by the KKK, and the nativist ideas of the twenties defined Mexicans as filthy and

⁶³ *Trial Transcripts*, July 11, 1945, 690.

⁶⁴ “Brownson House: a Social Service Center,” *The Tidings*, 1916.

⁶⁵ *Trial Transcripts*, July 11, 1945, 679.

⁶⁶ *Trial Transcripts*, July 11, 1945, 691.

with possible diseases, and that was the cause for extraordinary and random medical tests given for diseases like tuberculosis. These statements offended Marcus, who had children of Mexican-Jewish descent. His wife was a housewife of Mexican descent who followed Mexican traditions, spoke Spanish, and remained faithful to Catholicism. The Garden Grove School District superintendent, James L. Kent, demonstrated discrimination against Mexicans. Discrimination rooted in the mentality of white supremacy sought to oppress a minority because of physical appearance, language, culture, and/or religion. As Kent stated, “Mexican students were inferior to the white students.”⁶⁷ Kent’s thesis at the University of Oregon reflected his ideology against Mexicans, where he described a stereotype that contrasted with McCormick’s experience at Brownson House. It was notable in the trial; Judge McCormick suggested, “Wouldn’t his (Mexican) assimilation efficiency be improved by putting him with children who speak English rather than with those who had the bilingual disqualification.”⁶⁸ Kent believed that bilingual students were academically retarded. The Brownson House education was bilingual, and children better understood American ideals thirty years earlier. In the *Mendez* trial, Marcus demonstrated how academic intolerance of Mexicans extended beyond their language and culture. In Kent’s thesis, he inferred that Mexicans were inferior and should be segregated due to their inability to assimilate.

Judge McCormick was aware of the existing prejudice of school district officials. His earlier work at Brownson Settlement House contrasted the systemic racism in the United States used to subjugate and oppress minorities due to their race, religion, culture, and/or language. Brownson House was a place of education and recreation that helped children avoid crime. For example, in 1943, Father Nunez of San Bernardino created a baseball team to help young people not join criminal gangs. Judge McCormick

⁶⁷ *Mendez v. Westminster*, Trial Transcripts, (Los Angeles, July 5, 1945), 122.

⁶⁸ *Mendez v. Westminster*, Trial Transcripts, (Los Angeles, July 10, 1945), 521.

suggested that children must have mutual education and recreation in our society to help provide them with a secure environment.

In the historical context of the end of World War II, the United States was proclaimed as a world leader in democracy and the free world. However, within the country's boundaries, repression of non-white minorities and the lack of social justice existed in society. The paradigm of the American dream vanishes with unjust laws that subjugate minorities. Since his childhood, Paul J. McCormick experienced discrimination for his religious beliefs and nationality. As an Irishman, he was not considered as white as his Protestant counterparts. As a judge and lawyer in the city of Los Angeles, he dedicated himself to helping those unprotected minorities like Eastern Europeans, Russians, Jews, Mexicans, and Japanese who lived in the poor slums of east Los Angeles. Immigrants found safety and asylum in the Brownson House. In the Knights of Columbus, he used the fraternity to fight against the Ku Klux Klan and their hate speech against non-whites and Catholics. When Mendez's case reached his court, it was the opportunity to fight bigotry and repression with the law in one hand and humanity in the other.

Judge McCormick's opinion determined segregation prevented children of Mexican descent from "deriving a common cultural attitude." He issued an injunction to the school districts in Orange County to halt discriminatory practices. His experience with the children of Brownson House, where the aim was the cultural integration of American ideals and social justice, helped him appreciate the need for integration for all children in a school setting. U.S. Supreme Court Justice Earl Warren's opinion in the *Brown* case called education the pathway to the "very foundation of good citizenship." Judge Paul J. McCormick wrote in his conclusion, "A paramount requisite in the American system of public education is social equality. It must be open to all children by unified school association regardless of lineage"⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Paul J. McCormick, *Mendez v. Westminster*, Conclusion of the Court, (United State District Court, Southern District of California, Central Division, February

Sandra Robbie concluded, “When we learn about Mendez, we break the stereotypes, and we break the attitudes of what people think Mexican children, or children of any color, are capable of.”⁷⁰ At Brownson Settlement House, McCormick intervened to provide education and public health to Mexican children knowing the social disadvantage they lived with due to the racial rhetoric of white supremacy during the Progressive Era. As a Knight of Columbus, he fought against the *Klan*’s racist and anti-Catholic ideology. As a Catholic, he believed social justice and human rights helped strengthen our society. With Mendez’s final decision, Judge Paule fought against racial segregation in the United States.

Today, although there is no segregation, there are children who remain disadvantaged in opportunities in the United States. As a result of their immigration status, children and teenagers are considered Dreamers. Due to the lack of empathy and humanism of federal judge Andrew Hanen in Texas, thousands of children and young people are in legal immigration limbo. They are second-class children who will not be able to aspire to higher education and the accompanying opportunities in the future. These children have adopted the United States as their country and do not know any other place of origin than this nation. These immigrants do not have the same opportunities to succeed, and the fear of being deported segregates them within their communities.⁷¹ McCormick proved that to achieve the assimilation of immigrants, the United States must provide social justice that protects them and helps them pursue the American dream.

After twenty-seven years as Chief U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of California, McCormick retired in 1951.

18, 1946), 11, accessed February 12, 2023,

<https://mendezetalvwestminster.com/family-home-pages/>

⁷⁰ Sandra Robbie, *Mendez v. Westminster: A Living History*, Michigan State Law Review, 2014, 7.

⁷¹ Uriel J. Garcia, “Texas judge orders federal government to stop granting new DACA applications,” *The Texas Tribune*, July 16, 2021, accessed, March 23, 2023, <https://www.texastribune.org/2021/07/16/new-article-1626468650daca-texas-judge>. Dreamers are undocumented immigrants who came to the United States as children, lived and attended school here, and identify as Americans.

Two years later, on April 11, 1953, Pope Pius XII conferred the pontifical decoration of Knights Commanders of St. Gregory upon Judge Paul J. McCormick.⁷² According to a 1945 report, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) noted, “Judge McCormick is recognized as a capable, efficient, fair, high-minded judge”⁷³ Today, federal judges in U.S. courts should carefully study Judge McCormick’s life and court decisions. He put aside his political affiliation to practice social justice fairly. McCormick spent his last days with his wife, Mary J McCormick, and on December 3, 1960, at 81 years old, he died in Los Angeles. His funeral was held at St. Vibiana’s Cathedral. Historians must remember Judge McCormick’s legacy for his social and judicial work. As Judge Paul J. McCormick did, Catholics who are in political power should not forget to help the unprotected and helpless immigrants, refugees, children, and oppressed citizens in the United States.

⁷² “Pontiff Pays Honor to Five Southlanders,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 11, 1953. The Pontifical Equestrian Order of St. Gregory the Great was established on September 1, 1831, by Pope Gregory XVI. The order is one of the five orders of knighthood of the Holy See. The honor is bestowed upon Catholic men and women in recognition of their personal service to the Catholic Church, through their unusual labors, and the examples they set in their communities and their countries.

⁷³ Memorandum for the Directors, *Federal Bureau of Investigation*, Los Angeles, August 16, 1945. Memorandum to Director, *Research Matter*, April 4, 1939. The FBI released a report when McCormick was a candidate to be in the Supreme Court.



Figure 4: "Retires from Federal Bench," 31 August 1951. Paul J. McCormick (Federal Judge). Los Angeles Examiner Negatives Collection, 1950-1961, USC Digital Library. Los Angeles Examiner Collection

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History in the Making

History in Media

Feminism and the Effects of Horror Films on the Movement

By Brooke Denham

The first thing that comes to mind when we think of the 1960s are the changes that society underwent due to race, gender, sex, sexual orientation, and a whole slew of other social aspects. One of the biggest catalysts for change in the 1960s and well into the 1970s was feminism, where conversations over the roles and duties of women came into play and shifted into fitting how women were viewed as the common standard versus what the previous masculine ruling society deemed appropriate. We saw women go from wives, mothers, and homemakers to advocates for reproductive rights, equal access in the workplace and schools, and freedom outside of the house. However, the continued oppression of these feminist movements can be seen, enshrined forever in the portrayal of women in film, specifically horror, and their place in saving their own little world. The idea of women being victims or damsels in distress to be saved by a strong, gripping man, who seemingly wins the woman as a reward, was common in the horror genre of the mid-twentieth century and is still common today. However, since the late-1970s, horror has progressed into a new role, the “final girl horror,” allowing that damsel in distress to make her own way and save herself, periodically allowing her to be the last woman standing. But the changes the horror genre underwent between the 1950s and 2000s were very dramatic and showed the shift of women going from property and something to

protect to the sole survivor who outsmarts the killer and empowers others to do the same. This essay will outline the basics of the feminist movement, introduce the 1950s and 1960s horror, specifically the films *Psycho* (1960) and *Rosemary's Baby* (1968), and usher in the horror genre's later years and the changes that it went through to become more inclusive.

The Feminist Movement & Opposition

Feminism, like any movement, has waves, the first wave occurred after the 19th Amendment's ratification in the 1920s, which granted women the right to vote, and the second wave came to fruition in the mid-1960s right alongside the Civil Rights Movement and the Chicano Labor Movement. Feminism's first wave can be dated back to the first Woman's Rights Convention in 1848; however, feminism has ties that extend as far back as the French Revolution (1789-1799).¹ The Abolitionist Movement of the early to mid-1800s follows in similar footsteps, and we see one of the first bites of attempted freedom from women like Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902) and Lucretia Mott (1793-1880), who were banned from speaking or voting at the first World Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840.² Harassment from their male counterparts following the breaking of said rules led to the creation of the Women's Rights Convention, designed by Mott and Stanton where over three hundred women convened and created their own Declaration of Independence in a sense, including rights like "women's education, rights to property, and organizational leadership."³ From this time period, the term "suffragette," which was a "woman who advocates suffrage (or voting) for women,"

¹ Kerri L Alexander, "Feminism: The First Wave." *National Women's History Museum*, 5 Apr. 2021, www.womenshistory.org/exhibits/feminism-first-wave-0. Accessed 13 Nov. 2022.

² Alexander, "Feminism: The First Wave"

³ Alexander, "Feminism: The First Wave"

emerged.⁴ The inclusion of women of color was severely lacking, leading to the formation of groups such as the American Woman Suffrage Association, whose leadership consisted of Frances Ellen Watkins Harper (1825-1911) and Sojourner Truth (1797-1883).⁵ In 1916, feminism took off when Margaret Sanger (1879-1966) opened the first birth control clinic in the United States, which garnered immediate backlash, but ultimately it led to what we now know as Planned Parenthood.⁶ Despite this shift towards women's equality, the ratification of female voting rights did not come until late 1920 when the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution passed. After that, feminism seemed to diminish since many women saw it as the ultimate feminist win.⁷ Alice Paul (1885-1977) took feminism one step further; in 1923, she introduced the first attempt to pass the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), which was shot down due to women being afraid that the protections they had up until this point would be dismissed if ERA was pressed too hard.⁸ With the dismissal of ERA around 1923, the first wave of feminism closed. However, between the first wave and the incoming second wave in the 1960s, the fight for feminism continued. Substantial contributions to the movement began, including the arrests and fining of women for short dresses or "revealing" bathing suits and the establishment of the All-American Girls Baseball League in the Spring of 1943 following the involvement of America in World War II (1939-1945). Phillip Wrigley (1894-1977), of the Wrigley Gum Company, established an American-Canadian baseball league to replace baseball players like Joe DiMaggio and Yogi Berra, who were drafted or signed up to serve in the war.⁹ The All-American Girls Baseball League

⁴ "Suffragette." Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/suffragette>. Accessed 14 Nov. 2022.

⁵ Alexander, "Feminism: The First Wave"

⁶ Alexander, "Feminism: The First Wave"

⁷ Alexander, "Feminism: The First Wave"

⁸ Alexander, "Feminism: The First Wave"

⁹ Jeneane Lesko, "AAGPBL League History." AAGPBL Players Association, 2014, <https://aagpbl.org/history/league-history>. Accessed 13 Nov. 2022.

(AAGBL) consisted of over six hundred women spread across fifteen teams between 1943 and 1954 when the league was officially dissolved. Nonetheless, over those eleven years, AAGBL players underwent strict enforcement, such as attending “charm school” with Helena Rubenstein, who also managed the upkeep of the women’s feminine image to the public.¹⁰ There were also strict rules about maintaining a feminine appearance on and off the field by wearing only dresses and skirts, adhering to the six-inches-above-the-knee rule, wearing lipstick at all times, maintaining long hair, getting dates and eating only at places approved by chaperones, amongst other strict rules.¹¹ When men returned from the war, women were no longer needed to entertain Americans and were forced back to the “homemaker” lifestyle, which, in part, led to the second wave of feminism in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

As previously mentioned, women pursued this small source of freedom during World War II, as they not only participated in baseball but were able to experience economic independence due to securing factory jobs that were traditionally only held by men. During their employment, they received “maternity leave, childcare, and counseling” per the unions that helped women get these manufacturing jobs.¹² When men returned from war and women were terminated from their jobs, the disparities in pay began to gain attention; men were getting paid more in the new post-war era than women were paid during the war for the same work.¹³ The post-war era saw an increase in social uproars over societal gender inequalities, which led to an increase in publications in 1959 outlining the importance of women in the world while also addressing the continued oppression and silencing of women when it came to their husbands, fathers, grandfathers,

¹⁰ Lesko, “AAGPBL League History.”

¹¹ “AAGPBL Rules of Conduct.” AAGPBL Players Association, <https://aagpbl.org/history/rules-of-conduct>. Accessed 13 Nov. 2022.

¹² “What Was the Second Wave Feminist Movement.” DailyHistory.org, 28 June 2021,

https://dailyhistory.org/What_was_the_Second_Wave_Feminist_Movement.

¹³ “What Was the Second Wave Feminist Movement.”

brothers, etc.¹⁴ However, between the first and second wave of American feminism, a French feminist by the name of Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986) published a book in 1949 called, “The Second Sex” where she outlined the role of women as the “inferior sex” compared to men. Fourteen years later, American housewife, journalist, and activist Betty Friedan (1921-2006) published “The Feminist Mystique,” which used “The Second Sex” as a starting post into deeper thoughts regarding breaking the boundaries of women as more than simply wives and mothers, but as women fitting into the everyday workforce.¹⁵ “The Feminine Mystique” sold over three million copies, mostly to mothers who would begin to express the same outrage as those who would comprise the second wave of feminism.¹⁶ Furthermore, former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt (1884-1962) and colleagues worked with the League of Women Voters and alongside representatives of the Democratic Party in an effort to rally women who felt silenced by the men in their life since her husband, Former President Franklin Roosevelt’s (1882-1945) presidency.¹⁷ Mrs. Roosevelt did not stop her advocacy until her death in November of 1962, meeting with Former President John F. Kennedy (1917-1963) numerous times to discuss his legislation affecting women and leading discussions in JFK’s Women’s Bureau.¹⁸ In 1963, with the Women’s Bureau pushing for legislation and having heard the turmoil from “The Feminine Mystique,” President Kennedy signed the Equal Pay Act of 1963 into law, making it illegal to pay women less than men. Shortly after, two more pieces of legislation

¹⁴ Three books published in 1959 were crucial to the women’s movement: “A Century of Struggle” by Eleanor Flexner, “A Century of Higher Education for American Women” by Mabel Newcomer, and “Women and Work In America” by Robert Smuts. “Part I - A Passion for the Possible - Feminist Majority Foundation.” Feminist Majority Foundation, 15 June 2020, <https://feminist.org/resources/feminist-chronicles/the-feminist-chronicles-1-a/>. Accessed 7 Sep. 2022.

¹⁵ “What Was the Second Wave Feminist Movement.”

¹⁶ Kerri L Alexander, “Feminism: The Second Wave.”

¹⁷ “Part I - A Passion for the Possible - Feminist Majority Foundation.”

¹⁸ “Part I - A Passion for the Possible - Feminist Majority Foundation.”

passed. First, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which “prohibited the discrimination of a person in the workplace based on race, sex, religion or national origin,” and the second, legislation being, *Griswold v. Connecticut* (1965), which “prevented anyone from limiting a woman’s access to contraception or other methods of birth control;” the latter of which served as a focal point in the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision which “protected a woman’s right to an abortion” at a federal level.¹⁹ As previously mentioned, up until 1963, the Women’s Bureau had dismissed ERA, which bundled the issues women had faced into one bill, which had consistently failed in Congress. Esther Peterson, the head of the Women’s Bureau, wrote a letter in 1963 to Senator Carl Hayden (1877-1972), thanking him for helping the ERA progress in Congress, despite it never passing. In this way, many consider 1963 a “banner year” for the feminist movement, starting the launch of feminism across the world, but especially in the United States.²⁰ Women rallied around organizations like the National Organization for Women (NOW) to further advance legislation that would consider them equal to their male counterparts, especially since more women were joining the workforce and focused on careers rather than families.²¹ From the 1960s and into the 1970s, the feminist movement progressed from “equal rights feminists” to “radical feminists,” going from wanting the same treatment as their male counterparts to wanting to change the foundation of the United States from a patriarchal society, feminists argued that if men continued to rule, women would never escape the oppression they faced.²² During this time, men either aligned with women and supported the movement or fought against the movement in order to keep the status quo, with women as wives and homemakers purely for men’s entertainment, pleasure, and need. The Women’s Rights Movement lived up to its name by challenging women’s rights to abortions, education,

¹⁹ Kerri L Alexander, “Feminism: The Second Wave.”

²⁰ “Part I - A Passion for the Possible - Feminist Majority Foundation.”

²¹ Kerri L Alexander, “Feminism: The Second Wave.”

²² Kerri L Alexander, “Feminism: The Second Wave.”

gendered roles, and equal pay in the workplace, as well as many other things focused on feminist freedom. Similar to the difficulties real women faced in America, movie women were facing difficulties of a different variety.

Female Portrayals in Horror Films

1950s and 1960s horror films seemed to follow the idea of men aligning with the women around them or fighting back, with no in-between. Women were either the victim or the suspect, who needed reforming, commonly coming from a strapping young man. Many of the horror films from the 1950s that portrayed women as antagonists failed to portray them as regular human beings, rather casting them into roles that used them as vessels for some form of animal or demon, such as in *La Bruja* (1954) where Lilia de Valle is transformed from a terrible witch into a beautiful young girl to exact revenge on her creator's enemies; *The She Creature* (1956) where Marla English is changed from her beautiful self into an old sea creature that her boss uses to commit murders; and *Cat Girl* (1957) where an ancient curse over her familial inherited house turns Barbara Shelley into a leopard that kills anyone she wishes dead.²³ The implications that the horror genre portrayed women as monsters out for the kill follows the same pattern as the anti-feminist movements of the time where women were considered the antagonist for trying to give up the "good life" they were given with kids and an excellent, hard-working husband who provided them with a comfortable life. The additional portrayal of women as witches is something still used today; the difference is that in the 1950s, it was seen with a negative connotation which made the female out to be the villain. It was not until the 1960s that women antagonists were given the role of plain old serial killers, but in this decade, we also see an increase in the victimization of women

²³ *La Bruja*, directed by Chano Urueta (Columbia Pictures, 1954); *The She-Creature*, directed by Edward L. Cahn (American International Pictures, 1956); *Cat Girl*, directed by Alfred Shaughnessy, (Insignia Films, 1957).

whose only salvation lies at the hands of men. Some of the films that feature heroic men include Mitch from *The Birds* (1963), who saves Melanie from birds in the attic of the Brenner home; and Van Helsing from *The Brides of Dracula* (1960), when he saves Marianne from Dracula and subsequently frees all of the brides Dracula had acquired.²⁴ This idea that a woman's survival is dependent on a man, or that a man ultimately has to put a "vile and terrible" woman down, is a common theme in the horror genre and almost always includes some name-calling with descriptors of women that are less than ideal and derogatory. In these films, women who are not the typical mother and wife and are out to make their own money are victimized and labeled as bad guys or hopeless victims and are not characters meant to be taken seriously. It is also important to note that the women chosen to play these roles are socially beautiful, adding a sort of "don't trust beautiful women" theme and turning said women into something physically revolting, like a monster, to add to this connotation.

Psycho

A film that holds a lot of ammunition for feminists and the feminist movement is *Psycho* (1960). Directed by Alfred Hitchcock (1899-1980), who was known as a master of horror and a great thriller filmmaker, *Psycho* follows Marion Crane (played by Janet Leigh), who steals a large sum of money from her employer, claiming to take it to a bank for deposit, but instead packs her things and heads from her hometown of Phoenix, Arizona to California where she plans to meet up with her longtime boyfriend, Sam, who just so happens to be married, but seeking a divorce. The entire drive down, Marion is struck with visions of what her boss thinks of her and what he is telling the police and she is constantly paranoid about the authority figures around her. Once in California, she

²⁴ *The Birds*, directed by Alfred Hitchcock, (Universal-International Pictures, 1963); *The Brides of Dracula*, directed by Terence Fisher, (Universal-International Pictures, 1960).

stops at a motel where she meets Norman Bates (played by Anthony Perkins), who subsequently dresses as his mother and kills Marion. He later tries to do the same to her sister Lila before Sam intervenes and takes Norman down, where he is finally arrested.²⁵ The film uses the same form of victimization against not only Marion and Lila, but also Bates' mother. Marion is supposed to be seen as a thieving, lying, manipulating homewrecker who steals from her employer and breaks up the common nuclear family by sleeping with a married man. We are not really supposed to feel bad for her, but see her as the real "villain" of the movie until her murder. The "voice" of Bates' mother demeans Marion, insinuating that she's a cheap, skimpy woman who wants Bates and nothing else, despite her staying at his motel.²⁶ We view Mrs. Bates as a cruel woman, but at the end of the film, it is explained that this is not necessarily true. Mrs. Bates, who has been dead for the entire film, married a man prior to her death who was not Bates' father, and in a jealous rage, having finally not gotten his mother's full attention, Norman kills her and her new husband.²⁷ Audiences are meant to believe that Mrs. Bates kills Marion in the infamous shower scene. However, upon Lila's arrival and her discovery of Mrs. Bates' body, it is learned that Norman has kept her body to cross-dress as her when he kills his victims by giving the impression that Mrs. Bates is the murderer, when really, he has a mental illness, and his mother's voice is a creation of his mind.²⁸ Bates uses his mother as a scapegoat, giving off the inference that a protective and controlling mother who raises her son with no father present will become overprotective and overbearing in her love for her son. The mother's control can be used as an example of Mrs. Bates being cast in the role of victim and suspect, which, as previously mentioned, was the dominating perception of women in horror films. Before the big reveal, audiences think of Mrs. Bates as very cruel and belittling, and it can be assumed that it's

²⁵ *Psycho*, Directed by Alfred Hitchcock, (Paramount Pictures, 1960).

²⁶ *Psycho*, Directed by Alfred Hitchcock.

²⁷ *Psycho*, Directed by Alfred Hitchcock.

²⁸ *Psycho*, Directed by Alfred Hitchcock.

not just towards Marion but towards any woman that comes to the motel that shows interest in Norman. Later, she is seen as a victim of her son's anger. Not only has she been murdered by him, but she was not properly laid to rest. Her coffin is buried without her body, and she is kept, decomposing, in her own fruit cellar, to be used as a catalyst for Norman's continued rampage. Same thing with Marion; she is seen as the enemy when she steals from her boss and runs off to be with her married boyfriend. There is a lot wrong with this picture; portrayed as a thief and an adulteress, she is also guilt-ridden—seeing that she ran—but also plagued with guilt visions. When Marion is murdered, she is seen as a true victim whose family and boyfriend defend her by showcasing her as a loving girlfriend and sister, someone to love and trust with their life. Both women (Marion and Mrs. Bates) are only seen as the victims of Norman Bates at the end of the movie.

Another piece of ammunition for feminism surrounds Lila and Sam, who are romantically involved after the death of Marion, who is, surprisingly, now considered a supporting character, insinuating that women are disposable and can be traded in for another. The film portrays numerous women as victims of Norman Bates who are to be saved by men like Sam or Detective Milton Arbogast. Like the real-life women that influenced these characters, Mrs. Bates, Marion, and Lila are examples of the assumption that by straying from domestication and family life women could ruin society.

Rosemary's Baby

Another feminism indulgent film of the 1960s is *Rosemary's Baby* (1968). The film was directed by Roman Polanski (b.1933), who in 1969, lost his pregnant wife, Sharon Tate, to the Manson family, along with four other friends staying with her at the time.²⁹ This

²⁹ Roy, Jody M. "Glamorized Hatred: Our Obsession with Serial Killers," In *Love to Hate: America's Obsession with Hatred and Violence*, (Columbia University Press, 2002) 89–113. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7312/roy-12568.10>.

violence against a woman in Polanski's life adds context that women are meant to be viewed as inferior to men that they are either married to or victimized by. *Rosemary's Baby* follows this same theme by trailing Guy and Rosemary Woodhouse (played by John Cassavetes and Mia Farrow, respectively), who move into an older New York apartment building in order to expand their family. Once there, Rosemary starts to experience societal and beauty pressures from her husband when she cuts her hair, making her look more "masculine," but also when she doesn't want to have dinner with their older neighbors, the Castevets anymore because of the difference in generations, and therefore topics.³⁰ Rosemary later feels odd about the food Mrs. Castevet makes and, during her pregnancy, the smoothies Mrs. Castevet has her drink.³¹ A lot of the things that Rosemary says she is skeptical about, Guy is quick to dismiss and very aggressive in his dismissing; after she is confirmed to be pregnant, he is very aloof and cold towards her.³² One of the biggest forms of victimization Rosemary faces in the film is when she is drugged via a chocolate mousse dessert from Mrs. Castevet, which Guy manipulates her into finishing. After passing out from the dosing, she comes in and out of consciousness, going between dreams of being on a yacht and in a church when in reality, she is in bed with Guy, surrounded by their neighbors from the apartment. When Rosemary wakes up the next morning, she is covered in scratches, and Guy seems to admit that he had his way with her to try for a baby again and got carried away. Rosemary is appalled by the idea of this, and later in the film, it is revealed that the devil used the disguise of Guy to sleep with Rosemary against her will and produce the Antichrist.³³ Keeping in mind that the film is set in the early 1960s, *Roe v. Wade* (1973) had not gone into effect, meaning that the concerns and choices Rosemary should have about her own body, and reproductive system are nonexistent unless her husband, Guy, a

³⁰ *Rosemary's Baby*, Directed by Roman Polanski, (Paramount Pictures, 1968).

³¹ *Rosemary's Baby*, Directed by Roman Polanski.

³² *Rosemary's Baby*, Directed by Roman Polanski.

³³ *Rosemary's Baby*, Directed by Roman Polanski.

male, is present. When Rosemary expresses concerns to her friends about her pain, they assure her to go to a different doctor than the one recommended by her husband. The doctor, Guy, and Mrs. Castevet all dismiss her friends' advice and the advice of maternity books and instead claim her pains are normal and feed her "vitamin filled" drinks and foods, and are relentless in the pursuit of keeping her away from "normal" and outside medical advice and treatment.³⁴ As the film progresses and Rosemary starts to claim she is experiencing demonic activity, Guy and the Castevets make Rosemary out to be insane, until she delivers the son of Satan. The film concludes with her viewing her son for the first time who, a neighbor then claims, "has his father's eyes" when Rosemary complains about them and her realizing that everything, she had suspected leading up to the moment has been true and that her paranoia has not been in vain, however she has no choice but to accept the outcome of her life because she is alone against the whole apartment building and her husband.³⁵ *Rosemary's Baby* is an example of "paranoia cinema" that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s in which a main protagonist (often a woman) has an "insane" theory about something that proves to be true. In this case, the theory is that Rosemary is at the center of a satanic cult and is being used as the catalyst to bring about a new devil, and she is proven correct by the end of the film.³⁶ The whole film explores the woman's role in the patriarchal society and how the decisions she should be able to make about her own body are not hers to make. Likewise, it can be implied that the same shot of her apartment building at the beginning and end of the film supports an acceptance of this patriarchal world. By using the same shot, it is implied that despite the horrors Rosemary faces throughout the film, nothing will change because men still rule the world and women are just living in it, despite most women facing the same hardships (maybe not as severe as Rosemary) no one will change

³⁴ *Rosemary's Baby*, Directed by Roman Polanski.

³⁵ *Rosemary's Baby*, Directed by Roman Polanski.

³⁶ *Wheeler W. Dixon, Film Noir and the Cinema of Paranoia*. (Edinburgh University Press, 2019).

anything because women are considered soft and weak and will just accept their fates which women during the early to mid-1900s had done because they were tricked into believing they would never be able to rise to the occasion.

The Texas Chainsaw Massacre

Another film that encompasses some issues surrounding the women's rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s is Tobe Hooper's *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* from 1974. The main character, Sally Hardesty (played by Marilyn Burns), and a group of her friends head to Texas to check on Sally's grandfather's grave after a series of grave robberies, but they run out of gas in their van not long after arriving in the deserted area. After being turned away at a gas station, they visit an old house of the Hardesty family. Two of Sally's friends run off and find another house, the Sawyer house, where they look for gas generators and try to contact the owners to beg for some gas. They are the first to die at the hands of Leatherface, and following the quick and brutal deaths of most of the group, Sally is left alone. She flees to the gas station again, where the worker eventually subdues her violently and takes her to the Sawyer house, introducing her to a family of local cannibals, of which Leatherface is the center. Sally is the only one to escape after suffering through a dinner where she is nearly force-fed human remains by the men.³⁷

One of the most notable features of *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* is that the only women present in the film are victims of the chainsaw-wielding villain. An interesting viewpoint of the film comes from a blog by Joe Corr, who draws similarities between the family in the film and the idea of the nuclear family that so many anti-feminists argued for. Corr's idea stems from the fact that the Sawyer family is made up of all seemingly degenerate men, with

³⁷ *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, Directed by Tobe Hooper (Bryanston Distributing Company, 1974).

no females present other than the rotted corpse of a grandmother.³⁸ The nuclear family is laser-focused on the idea of a man, woman, and children, and *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* seems to stray from this, even insinuating that no women in the house can lead to violent and horrifying mass murder. There is a strong patriarchal sway in the film, with Sally suffering the brunt of the Sawyer grandfather's hunger for blood, as seen when Sally's finger is cut for him. The Sawyer family and their dwelling can be seen as the result of women "abandoning" their posts and fleeing the household to find freedom in the American world. Similarly, Leatherface, in the dinner scene, is portrayed as wearing a mask with garish makeup along the eye holes and mouth, taking on a more "feminine" appearance. Since he is the one doing the butchering of people in the household, in this respect, he can be seen as the woman of the household, cooking their meals after he has captured the meat. Corr also suggests this, claiming that Leatherface not only cooks and prepares the meals but is also "chastised for letting his brother run amok" and is seen as the "servant" of the house, similar to how women of the 1960s saw themselves.³⁹ The view of Leatherface as passionate and confident when no one is around but submissive behind closed doors is a prime example of how women are characterized at this time. Likewise, Sally is seen as the leader of the group, but she is the victim of this "degenerate nuclear family," having been beaten and held hostage. Despite being seen as meat, she is also construed as the placeholder of the only female in the family, even placed there by Leatherface to move away from the role himself slowly.

Final Girl Trope

³⁸ Joe Corr, "Slaughterhouse Sexuality: Queering the Sawyer Family in Tobe Hooper's *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*," Medium, Accessed March 20, 2023. <https://doi.org/https://mandysweats.medium.com/slaughterhouse-sexuality-queering-the-sawyer-family-in-tobe-hoopers-the-texas-chainsaw-massacre-8085807c0cd7>.

³⁹ Corr, "Slaughterhouse Sexuality."

Later, between the late-1970s and the mid-1990s, we see an emergence of the “Final Girl Trope,” which was coined by Carol Clover in her 1992 book, *Men, Women, and Chainsaws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film* where she explores the use of a woman in horror films.⁴⁰ When thinking of the term “final girl,” some that come to mind for horror fans include Sidney Prescott from the film *Scream* (1996), Nancy Thompson from *Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984), and Laurie Strode from *Halloween* (1978). There are similarities between these characters that can be inferred based on the “final girl” trope. Most of these girls are brunettes, leaving the stereotypically sexually active blonde friend to provide an excellent death scene.⁴¹ Another stereotypical factor of these girls is that they are the “good girl,” “girl-next-door” teenagers, who are most commonly virgins (both *Halloween* and *Scream* confirm that their “final girls” are). Likewise, these girls never appear nude, and they abstain from drugs, drinking, and smoking.⁴² The “final girl” is intelligent enough not to suffer the same fate as her peers, but they may also suffer a fate at the hands of a theory called “Sudden Sequel Death Syndrome,” which states that having survived one’s killer, a “final girl’s” life expectancy—should she show up in a sequel—drops significantly which, unfortunately, is the case of Nancy Thompson in *A Nightmare on Elm Street 3: Dream Warriors* (1987), and Alice Hardy in *Friday the 13th Part II* (1981).⁴³ Pre-1970s, for a brief moment, audiences saw women being heroes or the last ones standing; it isn’t until this trope that women are seen as the ones to pull through to the end of a film.

Furthermore, in 2007, Merriam-Webster adopted a definition for the Bechdel Test, which is a series of criteria that determines if a work of fiction, like a TV show or a movie, is inclusive towards women. This criterion includes if two women are

⁴⁰ “Final Girl,” TV Tropes, 11 Sept. 2022, <https://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/FinalGirl>.

⁴¹ Carol J. Clover. *Men, Women and Chainsaws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992).

⁴² Clover, *Men, Women and Chainsaws*.

⁴³ Clover, *Men, Women and Chainsaws*.

involved in the work, if the women talk to each other, and if their discussion includes a topic not involving a man.⁴⁴ Many of the older works mentioned here do not fit within that criteria, but in modern society, there are more examples, such as *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (2022), where the discussion of survival and sisterhood eclipses the discussion of the few main men in the film, including the killer.⁴⁵ There are a number of demeaning words said by either the killers or someone around these girls that can further irritate the feminine population; however, the anger empowers these women to strive for success both on screen and off. “Final girls” are at times angered enough to get violent and chop the antagonist’s head off or unload a gun into the killer. The “final girl” trope is meant to empower women to do anything they want, even if they believe they cannot; since these “final girls” can kill their pursuers, why should a woman not be allowed to get a factory job if she wants?

Women have always struggled with their place in the patriarchy; this is seen throughout history books and films. Not only has this been proven by the examples presented here, but there are also women like Lorraine Warren (1927-2019), who, through the 1960s and 1970s, had her clairvoyance questioned by men who thought she was just using her “gift” for fame and money. However, Lorraine now has a new generation of men and women who idolize her due to her story being told in “The Conjuring” film universe. Many actresses in Hollywood have argued for more women in films rather than the one or two recurring roles, and feminism has even come to include the idea of the Bechdel Test. Horror films have scare tactics that are used to frighten and shock their audiences, and a lot of the terror and gore that they use feature young women who are utilized for their sex appeal or as a plot device. As seen over the past decades, women are either the antagonist, not “human,” or they are the hopeless victim left to be slaughtered or made to feel like they are losing

⁴⁴ “Bechdel Test,” Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, Merriam-Webster, Accessed 5 Oct. 2022, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Bechdel%20Test>.

⁴⁵ *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, directed by David B. Garcia (Netflix, 2022).

their minds. Over the past twenty years or so, the genre has shifted just a little bit to fit the “final girl” idea, where said young woman takes the killer down or survives whatever trouble affects the group she is a part of. The “final girl” trope is something that has garnered success despite still being a part of the victimization of these girls; however, it seems to be more self-sustaining, efficient, and useful for young girls and women to be seen as a “hero.” Regardless, the horror genre and film alike have led to the radicalization of women to fight for what they believe they deserve, no matter what the cost.

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Infinite Diversity or Infinite Opportunity: a Look at Star Trek and its Cultural Influence

By Kendra Vaughan

In 1966 the original *Star Trek* series premiered on national television.¹ It was the creation of Gene Roddenberry (1921-1991), a former police officer, who had a vision for the future of humanity. It took Roddenberry several years and a failed pilot episode before the show was ultimately picked up by Desilu Studios and aired on television.² By the time they were ready to film the second pilot episode, the lead actor Jeffrey Hunter (1926-1969), who played Captain Pike, had decided he would no longer be taking roles in television series, believing roles on the small screen to be beneath him. This led to a quick recasting of nearly the entire crew.³ From the outset, Roddenberry attempted to break the status quo by casting a woman, Majel Barrett (1932-2008), as the ship's first officer and creating a character that looked like a devil with red skin and pointed ears that would later be known as Mr. Spock. The studio objected to the original character design for Spock, noting that it was visually too similar to satanic characters and would likely disturb their intended audience. He was ultimately changed to have a more human skin tone to make him more palatable for audience members.⁴ Test audiences who viewed the original pilot found the casting of Majel Barrett and her character, the female first officer, unbelievable, as women did not hold powerful positions of that nature at the time. Forcing these changes gave us the *Star Trek* we know today complete with

¹ News from the Past, "A&E Biography: Gene Roddenberry (1994)," YouTube (July 13, 2021), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9gqdqtv14mE>.

² News from the Past, A&E Biography.

³ News from the Past, A&E Biography.

⁴ News from the Past, A&E Biography.

William Shatner (b.1931) as Captain Kirk and the more human-looking, less devilish, Mr. Spock played by Leonard Nimoy (1931-2015).



Figure 1: Star Trek: The Original Series cast photo.

Left to right: James Doohan, DeForest Kelley, Walter Koenig, Majel Barrett, William Shatner, Nichelle Nichols, Leonard Nimoy, and George Takei; copyright Paramount Studios.

Roddenberry's vision, while not exactly as he had originally written it, still flourished with a diverse cast complete with an alien; an African American woman, Nichelle Nichols (b.1932); a Japanese man, George Takei (b.1937); and a Russian character played by Walter Koenig (b.1936), all serving together on the bridge of the USS Enterprise. His push for diversity and inclusion made television history and spawned a franchise that has lasted over fifty years and inspired millions of people. Roddenberry's vision for a better humanity questioned and challenged the status quo for over fifty years. It preached "infinite diversity in infinite combinations" and showed a utopian Earth without poverty, greed,

prejudice, or war where every human being is accepted.⁵ *Star Trek* is well known for its social commentary and inclusive casting; it has promoted infinite diversity and inclusion, inspired the development of new technologies, influenced people on their career choices, and inspired some to question and condemn social injustices. It has not, however, been able to influence the masses to the point of achieving the ultimate utopian vision of humanity, YET. What follows is evidence that *Star Trek* has indeed had a profound impact on society in more ways than simply acting as entertainment for the masses. Its influence and impact have not only inspired many to choose careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields, but to develop new and innovative technologies, and has inspired some to question the very fabric of the social foundations operating within our modern society through the use of social commentary throughout its many iterations.

It is well known that *Star Trek* has been influential in the lives of its fanbase. One of the most documented effects has been its influence on the career paths taken by fans who have been inspired by the characters they love. From Chief Engineer Scotty's miracle work on the Enterprise's engines in *the Original Series*, to the doctors of Starfleet and their varied and sometimes humorous bedside manner, Counsellor Deanna Troi's profound ability to keep the *Next Generation* Enterprise crew sane, and *Next Generation's* Captain Picard's quest for anthropological knowledge and peaceful diplomacy, the characters of *Star Trek* have inspired many people to reach for the stars.

One of the most notable effects that *Star Trek* has had on the career choices of its fans is found in the fields of engineering and technology. Montgomery "Scotty" Scott (played by James Doohan 1920-2005) and Geordi La Forge (played by Levar Burton b.1957), the engineers of the Enterprise ships in the first two series,

⁵ *Star Trek: The Animated Series*, Season 1 Episode 7 "The Infinite Vulcan," directed by Hal Sutherland, written by Walter Koenig, featuring William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy and George Takei, aired October, 20, 1973 on NBC, <https://www.paramountplus.com/shows/video/1792775590/>.

have been noted to have inspired two generations of students to pursue degrees in engineering. James Doohan was awarded an honorary doctorate in engineering from the Milwaukee School of Engineering.⁶ Who found that his portrayal of the Scottish engineer on Star Trek had inspired upwards of 50% of their students to pursue engineering.⁷ Due to his influence, the school added as a question whether applicants were influenced by James Doohan on their applications to track how many were inspired by this one television character.⁸ Doohan has also been credited for saving the life of a suicidal fan who wrote him a letter. She expressed how distraught she was and how he'd always brought her joy. He reached out to this fan and asked that she meet him at a convention he was due to appear at two weeks later.⁹ They communicated for a few years after that at various conventions, and after a time, Doohan stopped hearing from her. Eight years later, the woman contacted him to thank him for everything he did to help her at her darkest hour.¹⁰ She let him know that she had turned her life around and had received her master's degree in electrical engineering.¹¹ Geordi, the Chief Engineer from *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, is also often referenced as a popular influence for engineering students in more recent decades.¹² The positive portrayal of Geordi's physical disability of blindness, which was overcome by the use of his trademark visor, has been inspirational

⁶ YouTube Movies, "Trekkies: 25th Anniversary Edition," YouTube (August 24, 2022), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tsILzNjvYn0>.

⁷ Larry Lange, "Long Run for an Enterprising Engineer," *Electronic Engineering Times*, no. 919 (September 16, 1996): 22; Peter Reynolds, "James Doohan on Engineering Students," YouTube (September 9, 2006), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rqedcvB8MKw>.

⁸ Peter Reynolds, "James Doohan on Engineering Students."

⁹ YouTube Movies, "Trekkies: 25th Anniversary Edition."

¹⁰ YouTube Movies, "Trekkies: 25th Anniversary Edition."

¹¹ YouTube Movies, "Trekkies: 25th Anniversary Edition."

¹² Kendra Vaughan, "Anthropology Student Writing a Research Paper about Trek Here... Mind Telling Me If Star Trek Has Influenced Your Education and/or Career Choices?...", Facebook, May 2, 2022, https://www.facebook.com/groups/1477972915840370/?multi_permlinks=2935826840054963.

to those seeking equal opportunity employment for those with accessibility challenges.¹³ While LeVar Burton may not have inspired as many engineering students as Doohan, he did inspire a generation of children through a different series which encouraged children to read and grow their imagination. Burton was the host of the popular series Reading Rainbow.¹⁴

While Trek's influence in the STEM fields is extensive, it has inspired those far beyond the fields of engineering and science.¹⁵ Nichelle Nichols, the actress who played Nyota Uhura, the Communications Bridge Officer on *the Original Series*, has been incredibly influential for women of color, not only in STEM careers, and most notably in the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) but for being the first African American actress in a regular supporting role on a series.¹⁶ This portrayal of Uhura as the communications officer on the bridge of a starship opened doors for other actors and women of color. Nichols told a story she heard from *Star Trek* creator Gene Roddenberry of the moment actress Whoopi Goldberg (b.1955) realized she could be or do anything she wanted. As a nine-year-old girl, she saw a woman of color on television who, for the first time in her memory, was not portraying a maid.¹⁷ This inspired her to become an actress. For the first time, women of color were represented in the media as being the intelligent, capable, and successful people they knew themselves to be. Nichols has been honored in recent

¹³ Mike Straus, "What Geordi La Forge Can Teach STEM About Accessibility," Star Trek, CBS Studios Inc., November 8, 2021. <https://www.startrek.com/news/what-geordi-la-forge-can-teach-stem-about-accessibility>.

¹⁴ *Reading Rainbow: The Tin Forest*, Season 14, Episode 7, edited by Douglas Schuetz, featuring LeVar Burton and Jeff Bridges, aired September 2, 2002, on PBS, <https://www.pbs.org/video/the-tin-forest-xew5hj/>.

¹⁵ Vaughan, "Anthropology Student Writing a Research Paper about Trek."

¹⁶ YouTube Movies, "Trekkies: 25th Anniversary Edition."

¹⁷ YouTube Movies, "Trekkies: 25th Anniversary Edition."

years with the NASA Exceptional Public Achievement Medal for her forty years of activism that helped diversify their ranks.¹⁸

Along with *Star Trek*'s influence on the career paths of its fans, the show's penchant for sticking to science and keeping things as realistic as possible has inspired many technological advancements in the last fifty years. All great advancements begin with a simple idea and some of the most utilized modern technology was inspired, at least in part, by *Star Trek*. Marty Cooper (b.1928) of Motorola saw how Captain Kirk's use of his clamshell communication device was capable of two-way communication with a starship, as well as using GPS signals to pinpoint the location of crew members and decided it was something he'd like to achieve. Motorola eventually went on to develop StarTAC. It was the first clamshell-style cell phone released to the public, and its design was inspired by the communicators of *Star Trek*. While Cooper began developing a portable phone at Motorola before *Star Trek* began airing, an idea for which he credits the comic book character Dick Tracy and his watch communicator for inspiring, the physical design of the StarTAC flip phone was credited to Captain Kirk's communicator from *Star Trek: the Original Series*.¹⁹ The talking computers, voiced by Majel Barret Roddenberry, from the second generation of Star Trek ships, inspired our own talking computer devices like Apple's Siri and Amazon's Alexa. Both Jeffrey Bezos and Steve Wozniak, the founders of Amazon and Apple respectively, have credited *Star Trek* for influencing them in their pursuit of technological development. Wozniak, who was heavily influenced by science fiction as a child, co-created the Silicon Valley Comic Con to bring together the two things he loves: science fiction and science-fact. This convention was aimed at supporting the STEM fields and celebrating shows like *Star Trek*. Wozniak said in an

¹⁸ Shanique Yates, "Nichelle Nichols Honored With Prestigious NASA Award For Her Contributions To STEM - AfroTech," AfroTech, December 8, 2021, <https://afrotech.com/nichelle-nichols-receives-prestigious-nasa-award>.

¹⁹ Julian Jones, "How William Shatner Changed The World (2006) Whole Film," Vimeo, May 1, 2023, <https://vimeo.com/208007135>.

interview, “I’m not sure I would’ve had the inspiration that I had to ever start Apple, and do all these technical things and I don’t think I would’ve had the meaning in my life if I hadn’t gone to *Star Trek* conventions when I was young...”²⁰ Jeff Bezos’ desire to found Blue Origin, a company that envisions humanity shifting its damaging industries to space in order to preserve Earth, is directly related to his fondness for *Star Trek* as a child and its portrayal of the exploration of the galaxy. In 2021, Bezos and Blue Origin began launching their passenger ships into lower orbit manned with varying guests. Bezos invited William Shatner, of Captain Kirk fame, to accompany him on one of the flights due to his inspiration and influence as the first Captain of the Enterprise that captured his imagination as a child. Without the inspiration of *Star Trek*, Bezos may not have pursued the path that led him to the founding of Amazon which allowed him to invest in projects like Blue Origin.²¹ Amazon Prime films created a movie to document William Shatner’s experience with Bezos and Blue Origin entitled *Shatner in Space*.²²

The Personal Access Display Device or PADD, from *Star Trek: The Next Generation* resembles the wide range of computer tablets on the market today. They are widely used devices, as their functionality and portability make them a favorite among consumers. These devices were inspired by the PADD, much in the same way that communicators inspired the design of the StarTAC flip phone. Steve Wozniak credits his love of *Star Trek* for influencing his development of Apple iOS and the founding of Apple Inc., which brought the ever-popular Apple iPad complete

²⁰ Zaki Hasan, “Interview: Steve Wozniak on Sci-Fi, Comic Books, and How *Star Trek* Shaped the Future,” *HuffPost* (blog), April 19, 2017, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/interview-steve-wozniak-on-sci-fi-comic-books-and_b_58f7e86de4b081380af51897.

²¹ Atomic Network, “Great Tech Innovators Influenced by Star Trek,” YouTube (August 15, 2018), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m2jnenfB21o>.

²² *Shatner in Space*, episode 1, featuring William Shatner, Sarah Knights and Jeff Bezos, released December 15, 2021, on Amazon Prime, <https://www.amazon.com/Shatner-in-Space/dp/B09NCH5D56>.

with Siri, the Apple voice interface.²³ PADDs function in much the same way as modern tablets do, acting as a handheld terminal connected to a main computer wirelessly so that the user can perform a variety of tasks. The iPad's data can be shared and stored via wireless and mobile internet and the battery life of the iPad is only slightly less than that described for the PADD. The two devices also have very similar security features and functionality. A user of the PADDs can remotely access or control other devices aboard the ship. Users of iPads and other tablets have the same capability over Wi-Fi networks and via Bluetooth.²⁴

There are several other technologies, both established and in development, that have also been inspired by *Star Trek* shows. The communications earpiece worn by Lieutenant Uhura in *the Original Series* inspired the Motorola Bluetooth headsets that have now evolved into a variety of wireless headphone devices.²⁵ Developers seeking to create a form of *Star Trek*'s replicator technology have developed 3D printing technologies.²⁶ Some are widely used today, such as the home models that can be purchased to print plastic items via a computer program along with an extruder that uses polyvinyl chloride (PVC) and other plastics. NASA has also been working on a similar device that can print food items in space to satisfy the cravings of astronauts on the International Space Station, ISS.²⁷ Several groups across the

²³ Liz W. Faber, "What the Journey from Star Trek to Siri Says about Our Culture," *Psyche*, September 20, 2022, <https://psyche.co/ideas/what-the-journey-from-star-trek-to-siri-says-about-our-culture>.

²⁴ Karn Bulsuk, "iPad and Star Trek's PADD Compared: The Technical Showdown," Karn Bulsuk: Full Speed Ahead, May 23, 2012, <https://www.bulsuk.com/2012/05/ipad-and-star-treks-padd-compared.html>.

²⁵ *5 Product Innovations That Were Inspired by STAR TREK - Part 2 | Some Serious Engineering - Ep10*, vol. 2, 2 vols., Some Serious Engineering, 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4_3YW0iDa14.

²⁶ *5 Product Innovations That Were Inspired by STAR TREK - Part 1 | Some Serious Engineering - Ep9*, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i8ZArSsmbOs>.

²⁷ David Dickinson, "NASA Looks at 3-D Food Printer for Star Trek-like Replicator," *Universe Today* (blog), May 22, 2013,

United States have also been working on a type of replicator technology that can print organic material such as replacement parts for people. The idea is to be able to replicate a vital organ from the cells of an individual that can replace a defective organ without the possibility of rejection, as rejection can happen with donated organs. Justin Minck, a biology graduate from California State University, San Bernardino, developed his own version of a biological 3D printer and was able to successfully print an ear-like structure with his device.²⁸ Automatic doors were first seen in *the Original Series* and have become commonplace in public buildings.²⁹ Transporter technology, while a long way from *Star Trek*'s level of capability, has also been in development for some time and scientists have been able to transport a single molecule with some success.³⁰ Other developed semi-functional counterparts derived from *Star Trek* are universal translators, subspace communications, and VR technology, similar to the holodecks which were recreational facilities in which users could immerse themselves in holographic environments and stories seen in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*.³¹ While it may be hard to believe that one science fiction television series launched in the 1960s could have such a profound impact on technological development, *Star*

<https://www.universetoday.com/102328/nasa-looks-at-3-d-food-printer-for-star-trek-like-replicator/>.

²⁸ Justin Stewart Minck, "Developing A Low Cost Biological Additive Manufacturing System for Fabricating Gel Embedded Cellular Constructs," accessed May 4, 2023,

<https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1922&context=etd>.

²⁹ *5 Product Innovations That Were Inspired by STAR TREK - Part 1 | Some Serious Engineering - Ep9*.

³⁰ Mete Atatüre and John J. L. Morton, "A Gem of a Quantum Teleporter: Diamond-Based Quantum Teleportation Works Every Time," *Science* 345, no. 6196 (2014): 510–11.

³¹ David Schneider, "To Boldly Go (Again)," *American Scientist* 93, no. 4 (August 7, 2005): 312–13; *5 Product Innovations That Were Inspired by STAR TREK - Part 1 | Some Serious Engineering - Ep9*; *5 Product Innovations That Were Inspired by STAR TREK - Part 2 | Some Serious Engineering - Ep10*.

Trek's impact has been one of the most inspirational and widespread in history.

The final aspect of *Star Trek*'s impact on society is through its use of social commentary and depiction of a post-capitalist utopian society. *The Original Series*, as well as *The Next Generation*, *Deep Space 9*, and *Voyager*, are known for their depiction of a utopian earth born of the ashes of World War III and what the writers called the Eugenics Wars. In *Star Trek* lore, Earth scientists in the late 1990s began tampering with human genetics to build a better human race free of disease and defects. It led to the extermination of millions of people. After this, an all-out war erupted across the planet resulting in nuclear detonations that ravaged most world governments and over 60 percent of the Earth's population. After the wars, warp technology was developed and on its first test, Earth was visited by representatives from Vulcan, the home planet of Mr. Spock from *the Original Series*. Upon discovering that humanity was in fact not alone in the universe, the world population was united like never before and grew into the utopia that is shown in all the *Star Trek* shows and movies.

This vision of humanity that follows the Vulcan edict of "Infinite Diversity in Infinite Combinations" suggests that diversity should be celebrated, not shunned or merely tolerated.³² The Eugenics Wars concept comments clearly on the actions of Adolf Hitler (1889-1945) in Germany during World War II (1939-1945) with the eradication of large numbers of Jewish, disabled, and otherwise impure individuals. Gene Roddenberry was a bomber pilot during WWII and witnessed the horrors of this war firsthand.³³ The Eugenics Wars also touched on the eugenics theory of Francis Galton (1822-1911) that surmised one could artificially produce a better human race through selective

³² Robert V. Kozinets, "Utopian Enterprise: Articulating the Meanings of Star Trek's Culture of Consumption," *Journal of Consumer Research*, June 1, 2001, <https://doi.org/10.1086/321948>.

³³ News from the Past, *A&E Biography*.

breeding.³⁴ Galton's theories led to the passing of laws in thirty-two states in the United States that led to the sterilization of tens of thousands of Americans until about 1963.³⁵ One of the most popular *Star Trek* villains, Khan, who originated in the episode "Space Seed," is discovered to be one of the genetically modified humans from the Eugenics Wars era who believed himself superior and thus sought to eliminate those beneath him.³⁶ The Eugenics Wars and World War III are described in minor detail in the pilot episode of the new series, *Star Trek: Strange New Worlds*, and was lightly touched upon in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*'s pilot episode, "Encounter at Farpoint."³⁷

Star Trek also comments on diversity in its choice of captains in the shows from the 1990s, casting an African American man named Avery Brooks as Captain Benjamin Sisko, who commands *Deep Space 9*, and its first female captain, Katherine Janeway played by Kate Mulgrew, on *Voyager*. Colonialism is a common theme in the *Deep Space 9* series, as well as themes of terrorist/freedom fighters striving to fight against oppressive colonizers. Gender and capitalist commentaries are common among all three series of the 1990s, the most striking of which is the introduction of the plight of all female Ferengi in *Deep Space 9*. Female Ferengi are forbidden from acquiring profits nor are they allowed to wear clothing. They are subservient to the males of the species who are the sole acquirers of wealth and status. In the episodes titled "Family Business" and "Profit and Lace" a prominent *Deep Space 9* character's mother, Ishka (aka Moogie),

³⁴ "Eugenics and Scientific Racism," Genome.gov, September 14, 2022, <https://www.genome.gov/about-genomics/fact-sheets/Eugenics-and-Scientific-Racism>.

³⁵ California eugenics accessed May 4, 2023, <https://www.uvm.edu/~lkaelber/eugenics/CA/CA.html>.

³⁶ *Star Trek: The Original Series (Remastered)* season 1, episode 22: "Space Seed" directed by Marc Daniels, written by Carey Wilber. Aired February 16, 1967. <https://www.paramountplus.com/shows/video/1179117705/>.

³⁷ *Star Trek: The Next Generation* season 1, episodes 1 and 2: "Encounter At Farpoint" directed by Corey Allen, written by D.C. Fontana and Gene Roddenberry. Aired September 28, 1987.

proves herself to be more capable of the acquisition of wealth than even the ruler of their planet, Ferenginar.³⁸ She is a depiction of the ultimate feminist and eventually proves that a female Ferengi's worth and abilities are equal, or even superior, to that of their male counterparts. Moogie is a symbol of radical feminism at its finest. She has become a feminist symbol in the *Star Trek* fan community and, as such, has been turned into an icon resembling Rosie the Riveter by artist Will Burrows. This image of Moogie has since been used as inspiration for tattoos, stickers, enamel pins, and countless memes.³⁹



Figure 2: Moogie enamel pin by Will Burrows Art 2023

³⁸ *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*, season 3, episode 23, “Family Business” directed by Rene Auberjonois, written by Ira Behr and Robert Wolfe, Aired May 15, 1995,

https://www.paramountplus.com/shows/video/eG0YrhGakckHXDO_ekNcGrSivSi62pf/.; *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*, season 6, episode 23, “Profit And Lace” directed by Alexander Siddig, written by Ira Steven Behr and Hans Beimler, Aired May 11 1998,

<https://www.paramountplus.com/shows/video/aMfIMHIoMKIBfsezKm9MRoWWCxnOR1mk/>.

³⁹ “Ishka ‘The Future Is Female’ Vinyl Sticker,” Will Burrows Art, May 3, 2023, <https://willburrowsart.com/product/future-is-female-sticker/>.

Star Trek had a unique opportunity to relate contemporary problems to the struggles faced by the characters in the shows. Always ending with what is likely to be the best possible outcome, usually by overcoming the hurdle and finding acceptance where there previously was none. These shows have given audiences the ability to find perspective and meaning in their daily struggles that were not grasped before. Many fans will agree that not only is it entertaining but being able to survive the struggle with their favorite characters every week has helped them survive their own daily struggles in life. While the franchise cannot capture the minds of everyone, it certainly does well for those who have found a home in it.

The newer *Star Trek* shows, of which there are five currently airing new episodes, do not have the same format as the older series. As such, they have become more prone to arcing storylines that no longer have the episodic commentary of old, but they have attempted to keep some of the radical perspectives and commentaries relevant to today's audiences. The newest and most like the older model of shows, entitled *Strange New Worlds*, has gone back to the episodic format of old, so there is hope that today's viewers will gain similar inspiration from the new shows as fans from past series have.⁴⁰

What was originally believed to be a failed science fiction show in the 1960s has become a franchise with more than a half-century of inspiring and influential storytelling. While it remains to be seen what the current shows can do for today's audiences, it is clear that in these unsettled times, we need the guiding light that once was *Star Trek*. Hope for a better future full of peace and prosperity and journeys to the stars would do everyone a bit of good. Perhaps the reformatting of the newer shows can draw in more viewers and can inspire unity to create a better future for the human race.

⁴⁰ *Star Trek: Strange New Worlds (Official Site) Watch on Paramount+*, 2022, <https://www.paramountplus.com/shows/star-trek-strange-new-worlds/>.

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Woman Warriors: The Fighting Women of *The Woman King* and *Black Panther*

By Rossandra Martinez and Daniela Bedolla

The 2022 film, *The Woman King*, dramatizes the story of Agoji, women warriors, and their fight against a new enemy, the Oyo, who were threatening their kingdom and way of life. Directed by Gina Prince-Bythewood, and starring Viola Davis, and Thuso Mdebu, *The Woman King* is a realistic dramatization of the Agoji warriors. The Agoji warriors, or Dahomey Amazons from the Dahomey Kingdom, were gathered by King Houegbadja (1645-1685), and later his son established “[them] as bodyguards armed with muskets used as Militia to conquer neighboring kingdoms.” King Houegbadja is credited as the First King of Dahomey.¹ The Agoji warriors are said to have been made up of hunters known as the “gbeto” and were later made up of slaves from conquests in neighboring villages.

The Woman King has revolutionized cinematography of black actors with proper lighting and showcasing their beauty. As acknowledged by Prince-Bythewood in a *Variety* conversation with Ryan Coogler, the director of *Black Panther*, “I don’t know that *Woman King* would be made if you didn’t do what you did with *Black Panther*.”² The 2018 Marvel film *Black Panther* is set in the fictional kingdom of Wakanda, an uncolonized African Kingdom, tucked far away from modern society. The hero, King T’Challa, is protected by a group of warrior women; the Dora Milaje resemble the historical real world Agojie warriors. In their joint interview Coogler and Prince-Bythewood discussed the intentions of *Black Panther* and *The Woman King* and how their

¹ About: Houegbadja, *DBpedia.org*. Accessed May 17, 2023.

² “Ryan Coogler & Gina Prince-Bythewood | Directors on Directors,” *Vanity Fair*, 2022, 5:48.

movies reshaped black history storytelling and representation of black actors in film. Prince-Bythewood is known for directing and creating black stories such as *Love & Basketball* (2000) and *Disappearing Acts* (2000). According to Coogler, Prince-Bythewood created movies with characters that provided a safe space for black audiences. Coogler has also been a successful and phenomenal director with moving stories as seen in *Fruitvale Station* and *Creed*. Coogler stated his intentions for his movies, “I thought that I wanted to make things that I could relate to, movies that I would want to see.” *The Woman King* and *Black Panther* seek to decolonize black history storytelling and historical dramatizations of prominent black stories such as the Agojie warriors of Dahomey. Some of the key themes of *The Woman King* (2022) were community, sisterhood, and loyalty. It is through these two film adaptations that mainstream audiences are able to restore black women’s voices to history while using these discoveries to transform present-day gender relations.³

The Woman King

The Dahomey Kingdom was a major regional Western African power in the 1700s and a massive player in the Atlantic Slave Trade in 1852. It was located in present day Benin. Even though Dahomey was a Western African kingdom in the slave trade, it still was in need of protection from other slave traders and competing kingdoms.⁴ According to Mellan Solly, “[t]his 6,000-strong force, known as the Agojie, raided villages under cover of darkness, took captives and slashed off resisters’ heads to return to their king as trophies of war,” it was, “[t]hrough these actions, the Agojie established Dahomey’s preeminence over neighboring kingdoms and became known by European visitors as “Amazons” due to

³ Stefan Berger, Heiko Feldner, and Kevin Passmore, *Writing History: Theory and Practice*, (Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), 164.

⁴ Mwanza, Accessed March 10, 2023.

their similarities to the warrior women of Greek myth.”⁵ Later, in the 1800s, more soldiers were recruited from foreign captives.”⁶ Figure 1 is a photograph of real Agojie warriors, it is important to note their appearance. They wield spears, knives, and their bodies are exposed. This is an intentional decision to cover the most important body parts and have enough range of movement to run and fight. As seen in *The Woman King*, the Agojie rub palm oil on themselves when preparing and sharpen their nails into claws. These women warriors were the protectors of the Dahomey Kingdom, they were highly skilled and loyal warriors. A key difference between this photo and the Agojie in *The Woman King* is the absence of headwear, despite this difference, *The Woman King* dresses Agoji warriors in relatively similar outfits as shown in Figure 3.

As Figure 1 and 2 show, the Dahomey were community oriented, as “the tribal groups, possibly forced to move due to the slave trade, coalesced around a highly centralised, strict military culture which was aimed at securing and eventually expanding the borders of the small kingdom.”⁷ *The Woman King* seeks to capture the community as shown in Figures 1 and 2. Akin Mckenzie attempted to capture the essence of *The Woman King*’s West African landscape. However, the production had to replicate the Dahomey kingdom in South Africa.

⁵ Mellan Solly, “The Real Warriors Behind ‘The Woman King,’” *Smithsonian Magazine*, September 15, 2022. Accessed March 14, 2023.

⁶ Veronica Mwanza, “Exploring the History of the Agoji, the Warrior Women of the Dahomey Kingdom,” *The Best of Africa*, October 21, 2020. Accessed March 10, 2023.

⁷ “The History of the Kingdom of Dahomey,” *Black History Month.org*, November 28, 2019. Accessed March 15, 2023.
<https://www.blackhistorymonth.org.uk/article/section/pre-colonial-history/the-history-of-the-kingdom-of-dahomey/>

Woman Warriors



Figure 1: 'Dahomey Amazons,' visiting Paris, France; ca.1891.⁸



Figure 2: In 1892, the French, led by Colonel Alfred-Amédée Dodds, a Senegalese mulatto, invaded Dahomey.⁹

⁸ "The History of the Kingdom of Dahomey," *Black History Month.org*.

⁹ "The History of the Kingdom of Dahomey," *Black History Month.org*.

The Woman King reestablishes women's voices in history and decolonizes historical representations of black voice and history. Nanisca, portrayed by Viola Davis, is a key political figure as the matriarch of the Dahomey Kingdom. She is the *miganon* (general) that leads the Agojie and a pillar of the kingdom. As a sign of respect to the female warriors, other members of the kingdom were not able to look upon the Agojie when they returned from battle. A member of the Dahomey said to their child, "The king does not allow us to look upon the Agojie."¹⁰ Inside the palace gates male and female soldiers were separated, and women were trained and prepared for battle. The Dahomey palace is a symbol of unity and power, allowing recruits to look at Agojie promoted equality and levels soldiers on the same playing field. Izogie is Nanisca's second in command and is responsible for training and approving incoming soldiers. Nawi is a new recruit eager to begin training, Nawi has not conformed to her family's wishes of becoming a bride and being sold for livestock, so she feels validated once she begins training for the Agojie. Izogie says to Nawi upon entering the doors between male and female quarters, "Beyond this wall is a palace of women."¹¹ It is important to note that Nawi's family attempted arranged marriages for her and was outcast because she would not match with any suitor, so the palace where Agojie trained was a place of solace for her.

As depicted in *The Woman King*, the Oyo were rivals of Dahomey, "a powerful Yoruba state in what is now southwestern Nigeria."¹² This remains true to history as "Dahomey paid tribute to Oyo for many decades in the 18th century, but at the same time was feared by surrounding smaller kingdoms."¹³ Its access to European trade and its dominance over the kingdoms of Allada and Hueda made the port of Ouidah the major trading port in the whole region throughout the 18th century. General Oda is head of the

¹⁰ *The Woman King*, directed by Gina Prince-Bythewood (Sony Pictures Entertainment, 2022), 8:35. <https://www.netflix.com/title/80218506>

¹¹ *The Woman King*, 12:45.

¹² Solly, 2022.

¹³ "Dahomey and Oyo," *African Kingdoms*.

Woman Warriors

Oyo, the rival of the Dahomey, tensions were high between the two kingdoms due to the traumatic background surrounding Oda and Nanisca. General Oda raped Nanisca as a young girl which fuels her hatred for him, as this is shown in the climax of battle. Initially, the Agojie were meant to break bread with the Oyo, but Nanisca puts herself in danger in order to fulfill her need to destroy Oda. The rape depicted in *The Woman King* has not been confirmed as a true event since this is speculation and a dramatized retelling of history. However, the names Nanisca and Nawi are the real names of Agojie warriors. Key differences between the Oyo and Dahomey were the use of horses and manpower. Dahomey trained the Agojie to be skilled fighters to protect the wellbeing of their people. *The Woman King* pans to different scenes between female and male soldiers practicing in designated areas of the palace. Izogie says to Nawi, “In the palace you do not have to look away.”¹⁴



Figure 3: Viola Davis (left) with other Agojie preparing for battle.¹⁵

¹⁴ *The Woman King*, 11:45.

¹⁵ Stephen Thompson. ‘The Woman King’ reigns supreme, *NPR*, September 16, 2022, [://www.npr.org/transcripts/1120745166](https://www.npr.org/transcripts/1120745166)

Critics

Director Gina Bythewood apparently attempted to maintain integrity of the retelling of Dahomey history, so she worked closely with “Leonard Wantchekon, a professor of politics and international affairs at Princeton University, who was also a historical advisor on the film.”¹⁶ This sentiment was shared by other viewers in that the actual Dahomey Kingdom was a major player in the slave trade, whereas in *The Woman King*, the Dahomey were against slavery, King Ghezo stated multiple times with Portuguese slave traders that his people were not a commodity and not to be sold. However, the real King Ghezo did free the Dahomey from slavery, “As historian Robin Law notes, Dahomey emerged as a key player in the trafficking of West Africans between the 1680s and early 1700s, selling its captives to European traders whose presence and demand fueled the industry—and, in turn, the monumental scale of Dahomey’s warfare.”¹⁷ According to Solly, “Dahomey emerged as a key player in the trafficking of West Africans between the 1680s and early 1700s.”¹⁸ Additionally, critics of films discussing slavery are worried that Hollywood is capitalizing on black pain and trauma. Some viewers feel that *The Woman King* added to the misconceptions of African cultures and history while perpetuating the idea of “barbaric and savage Africans.” Another critic, Filipe Freitas states, “Somewhere between a historical African ballad and a feminist epic, *The Woman King* is spectacularly unacademic, annoyingly predictable, and blatantly contrived. The basic and uninteresting screenplay, written by Dana Stevens, misfires in its stereotypical archetypes, failing to connect in a compelling fashion.”¹⁹

¹⁶ Laura Zornosa, “The Complicated History Behind The Woman King” *TIME*, September 22, 2022. Accessed May 20, 2023.

¹⁷ Solly, 2022.

¹⁸ Solly, 2022.

¹⁹ Filipe Freitas, “The Woman King,” *Always Good Movies*, January 25, 2023, <https://alwaysgoodmovies.com/reviews/the-woman-king-2022>

Directed by Ryan Coogler, *Black Panther* “celebrates African aesthetics, language, and cultural traditions with a healthy dose of Afrofuturism.”²⁰ Coogler brought to life the superhero that looked like him—a person of color. The review aggregator, Rotten Tomatoes, reported an approval rating of 96%, with an average score of 8.3/10, based on 532 reviews.²¹ According to one critic Brain Eggert describes the film as an “unabashed and defiant political viewpoint, supplementing its superhero genre mechanics with a relevant commentary on history, racism, and human injustice.” Another critic, Robert Daniels, describes *Black Panther*, as “a moment, not just for Marvel fans and Disney stans, but it was the rare instance of a film purporting itself to be a cultural movement, and succeeding.” American film critic Peter Travers of the *Rolling Stone*, called it unlike any other Marvel film, “an exhilarating triumph on every level from writing, directing, acting, production design, costumes, music, special effects to you name it.”²² However long before its premiere in 2018, *Black Panther* was in the works since 1992 in becoming a film. Actor and producer Wesley Snipes felt that Hollywood was not portraying Africa appropriately.²³ Snipes believed there was a misinterpretation of African culture and its people, but Snipes felt *Black Panther* can “highlight the majesty of the continent of Africa.”²⁴ Twenty-six years later the film *Black Panther* not only highlighted the majesty of Africa, but it also catapulted many actors of color to get leading roles in the film industry.

Marvel Studios reintroduced the world to *Black Panther*, on February 16, 2018. The readaptation of the comic superhero was finally given the chance to display his culture, strength, and intelligence to the world on the big screen. *Black Panther* is an

²⁰ “Black Panther,” *Rottentomatoes.com*, accessed May 23, 2023.

²¹ “Black Panther.”

²² Peter Travers, “Black Panther Review: Marvel’s History-Making Superhero Movies Masterpiece,” *Rollingstone.com*, accessed May 23, 2023.

²³ Josh Eells, “The Black Panther Revolution,” *Rollingstone.com*, February 8, 2018.

²⁴ Eells, “The Black Panther Revolution.”

adaptation of a superhero origin story designed for mass consumption by Marvel fans of all ages. The film not only captivated the world with its bright colors, riffs on African customs, and major fighting scenes, but the audience—new and old—saw Black Panther as a symbol of diversity within American society; something that was much needed. Directed by Ryan Coogler, starring Chadwick Boseman as King T'Challa, or the titular Black Panther, Letitia Wright as Shuri, King T'Challa's smart and ambitious little sister, Michael B. Jordan as Erik Killmonger, and Danai Gurira character named Okoye, is the leader of the elite-female-warrior group named Dora Milaje. Okoye fights side by side with the Black Panther, when his title and country is threatened by his cousin Erik Killmonger. The Dora Milaje or also known as "Adored Ones" play a major role within the film and comics, however many lack the knowledge of the real-life female warriors, such as the Agoji, that inspired the creation of the Dora Milaje. In other words, the Dora Milaje are a window into a true if not forgotten piece of history. Unlike *The Woman King*, *Black Panther* is based on a fictional country, Wakanda, that was born out of the imagination of legendary comic book novelist Stan Lee.

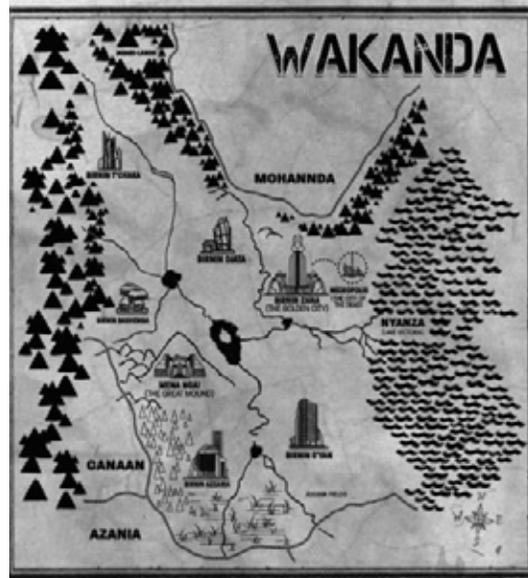


Figure 4: Historic map and the surrounding territories (Marvel Studios).²⁵

Both *The Woman King* and *Black Panther* feature African women in warrior roles generally portrayed by men, especially in the historical action-epic genre.²⁶ While both films have men in leading roles, the women are the overall object of the narrative. The Dora Milaje in *Black Panther*, sworn to protect the king, are the daughters of the eighteen tribes of Wakanda.²⁷ Their sole duty was to ensure the protection of the king, the Black Panther—similar to that of the Agojie. *The Woman King* is a tale inspired by the true story of real warriors. Although the film’s purpose is also to entertain first and foremost, it must somewhat realistically realize

²⁵ Karama, Horne. *Black Panther: Protectors of Wakanda: A History and Training Manual of the Dora Milaje from the Marvel Universe* (Epic Ink, 2022), 15.

²⁶ Liam Crowley, “The Woman King’s Jenel Stevens A Explains the Difference Between The Agojie and Black Panther Dora Milaje,” *ComicBook.com*, September 19, 2022.

²⁷ “Dora Milaje,” *Marvel.com*, accessed May 23, 2023.

what women were truly like in the 19th century. As they were real-life warriors notable for their ferocity in battle, the Agojie's tactics, weaponry, and fighting styles were designed to be historically accurate and efficient.²⁸ In *The Woman King*, as Nanisca is preparing the Agojie for battle she cries:

For 19 years Dahomey has lived under the thumb of the Agojie, when it rains our ancestors weep for the pain we have felt in a dark house of ships bound for distant shores, when the wind blows our ancestors push us to march into battle against those who enslave us. When our ancestors demand we rip the shackles of doubt from our minds and fight with courage, we fight not just for today but for the future. We are the spear of victory, we are the plane of freedom, we are Dahomey.²⁹

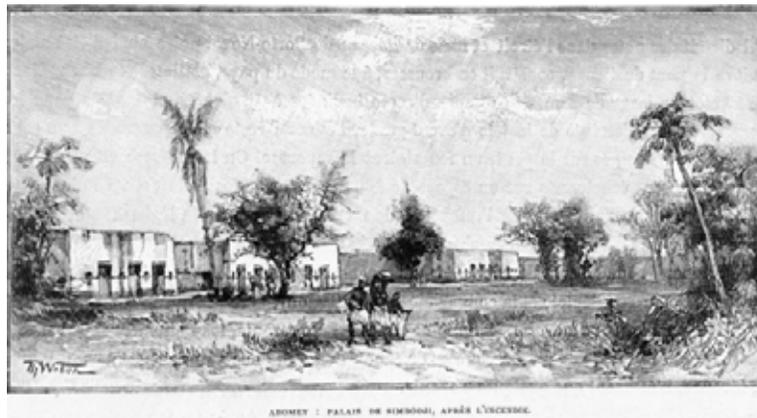


Figure 5: Royal palace at Abomey (Dahomey), after a fire in 1895. Source: *La France au Dahomey* – New York Public Library.³⁰

²⁸ Brandon Louis, “How The Woman King’s Agojie Differ From Black Panther’s Dora Milaje,” *Screenrant.com*, September 19, 2022.

²⁹ *The Woman King*, 1:20:01.

³⁰ “Dahomey and Oyo” *African Kingdoms*, <https://africakingdoms.co.uk/dahomey-2/#>

Both films had different adaptations of their “costumes.” *The Woman King* Agojie warriors wear traditional clothing. While *Black Panther* Dora Milaje “customers” are more technologically advanced. Due to the discovery of vibranium. Vibranium was discovered by Warrior Shaman and Chief of the Panther Clan Olumo or Bashenga the Knower. After the discovery of vibranium, Wakandan intellectuals began to study the potential of vibranium and discovered that the purest forms of vibranium could not be handled, because it would cause an irreversible mutation on humans.³¹ The Dora Milaje from the beginning are warrior-like and the Dora Milaje made their debut in 1998 in *Black Panther* Vol. 3, No. 1. written by Christopher Priest. From the depictions within the comics, the Dora Milaje were more feminine, with long, straight hair, red miniskirts, and high stiletto heels.³² The image of a stereotypical woman hypersexualized with skintight costumes that accentuate their curves. This image of women as sexual deviants is a deep-rooted issue within black storytelling, as there is a fetishization and black women’s hair and bodies are infantilized.³³

³¹ “What Does It Take To Become A Member of the Dora Milaje,” *Marvel.com*, May 9, 2022, <https://www.marvel.com/articles/culture-lifestyle/dora-milaje-protectors-of-wakanda-karama-horne#>

³² Jamie Broadnax, “Get to know The Dora Milaje, Black Panther’s Mighty Women Warriors,” *Vox.com*, February 21, 2018.

³³ Broadnax, “Get to know The Dora Milaje, Black Panther’s Mighty Women Warriors.”



Figure 6: *Black Panther Vol. 3, No. 1*.³⁴

In the comic world, the Dora Milaje are Black Panther’s “wives-in-training.”³⁵ According to costume designer Ruth Carter, they wanted “them [to] have a presence, more of a strength of authority.” The Dora Milaje are responsible for the protection of the king, so by removing all stereotypical representations of a “sexy” female warrior allow costume designers to recreate a suit that represented fierce, beauty and strength.³⁶ In the film, *Black Panther*, the Dora Milaje wear full bodied armor made from vibranium.

³⁴ Broadnax, “Get to know The Dora Milaje, Black Panther’s Mighty Women Warriors.”

³⁵ Russ Burlingame, “Black Panther Costume Designer on the Upgrades to the Dora Milaje,” *Comicbook.com*, January 30, 2018.

³⁶ Eric Francisco, “Black Panther Oscars: Costume Designer Explains Dora Milaje Armor,” *Inverse.com*, January 23, 2019.



Figure 7: Florence Kasumba (left) and Danai Gurira Marvel Studios' *Black Panther*.³⁷

The audience are shown the upgraded costumes. Red and gold are the main colors throughout the suits. The color red represents strength, passion and courage,³⁸ while gold represents prosperity, optimism and confidence.³⁹ Costume designer Ruth E. Carter referenced the Maasai, Himba, Dogon, Basotho, Tuareg, Turkana, Xhosa, Zulu, Suri and Dinka people in her designs.⁴⁰ The Dora Milaje suits are similar to that of the King T'Challa's Black Panther suit. Ruth Carter describes how making these changes made the Dora Milaje's development from comic book to film look more as "real warriors:"

³⁷ Arica L. Coleman, "There's a True Story Behind Black Panther's Strong Women. Here's Why That Matters," *Time.com*, February 22, 2018.

³⁸ Jacob Olesen, "Red Color Meaning: The Color Red Symbolizes Passion and Energy," *Colormeanings.com*, accessed May 21, 2023, <https://www.colormeanings.com/red-color-meaning-the-color-red/>

³⁹ Olesen, "Gold Color Meaning: The Color Gold Symbolizes Wealth and Success."

⁴⁰ Booth Moore, "Black Panther Costumer Designer Talks Tribal Tech Inspirations," *Thehollywoodreporter.com*, January 15, 2018.

They were protecting the king. And two, T'Challa being the Black Panther -- is walking around in this skin suit. We didn't want the guy in the skin suit walking around with the girls in the bathing suits. We developed it more as a real warrior might be developed," she added. "Real warriors who need their arms protected and need to have shields and armor and weaponry and shoes - like they're really gonna go to battle."⁴¹

Far from the comic book clothing, the Dora Milaje suits are a representation of what warriors look like. The costumes evolved and as the second part of *Black Panther* hit theaters, we see how the Dora Milaje suits continue to evolve. As for the *Woman King*, viewers are presented with a traditional African attire. Costume designer Gersha Phillips drew upon African tradition while creating the outfits for the film. Phillips describes her process by doing research to achieve a real representation of the Agojie. Phillips describes her time working alongside a historian to attain the intricate design for the Agojie:

Working with an actual historian who was able to dispel what Agojie should wear in terms of chest plates. Because that was a big thing, understanding whether they were going to wear those cowries and chest plates. We found those pictures from around 1870 – 1890 that is on Google. But what we realized with the help of the historian was that those photos were a redress of the Agojie for the World's Fair.⁴²

⁴¹ Russ Burlingame, "Black Panther Costume Designer on the Upgrades to the Dora Milaje," *Comicbook.com*, January 30, 2018.

⁴² Spencer Williams, "Designing The Costumes of The Woman King: An Interview with Costume Designer, Gersha Phillips," *Theartofcostume.com*, January 18, 2023.

Phillips mentions how the Agojie wore baggy pants, and originally designed the costume with the concept of baggy pants in mind. However, she incorporated wrap skirts—also seen in historical archives.⁴³ By incorporating wrapped skirts it allowed the women to move more freely. A difference between *The Woman King* and *Black Panther* is the difference of each character’s costumes—especially when it comes to the main characters of each film. Okoye, played by Danai Gurira, is the leader of the warrior group and the king’s most trusted advisor. She described the Dora Milaje as “unapologetically feminine and ferocious” in a recent interview, a claim that cannot be disputed once you see her slinging a spear.⁴⁴ There are many different components that make up the Okoye suit. For instance, the harness (symbol of protection) is made up of “tabards” which are decorative beaded works that are inspired by the Turkana tribe of Africa.⁴⁵ Okoye’s shoulder armor was gold, while the rest of the Dora Milaje wore silver. Okoye wore gold shoulder armor to signify her leadership.⁴⁶ Something of great significance is Okoye head tattoo. Several members of the Dora Milaje have tattoos but Okoye is the only one with the head tattoo. The symbolism of her head tattoo is not only for her established position, but it is meant to represent a “fighter pilot helmet.”⁴⁷ The “fighter pilot helmet” tattoo was time consuming, but according to Costume designer Ruth Carter “we wanted to take traditional tattoos and amplify them, so they looked more modern.”⁴⁸

⁴³ Russ Burlingame, “Black Panther Costume Designer on the Upgrades to the Dora Milaje,” *Comicbook.com*, January 30, 2018.

⁴⁴ “The Real-Life Warrior Women Who Inspired Black Panther’s Dora Milaje are Totally Fierce,” *Fournine.com*, accessed May 22, 2023. <https://fournine.net/entertainment/real-life-warrior-women-inspired-black-panthers-dora-milaje-totally-fierce>

⁴⁵ “Okoye and The Dora Milaje,” *BlackPantherCostum.me*, accessed May 23, 2023 <https://www.blackpanthercostu.me/dora-milaje/>

⁴⁶ “Okoye and The Dora Milaje.”

⁴⁷ “Okoye and The Dora Milaje.”

⁴⁸ “Okoye and The Dora Milaje.”

Nanisca, similar to Okoye, she too has different attire, yet similar to the rest of the members of the Agojie. Nanisca the general for the Agojie, and just like Okoye are the central components of what makes the Agojie and Dora Milaje great. Unlike the Dora Milaje, the Agojie did not have vibranium, nor precious metals that decorated their attire, on the other hand the use of traditional African attire that Gersha Phillips used to create costumes that represent the character. The Agojie were spiritual, and they believed in being guided and protected when they fought. Phillips acknowledged the information, and created each costume according to the character's personality.



Figure 8: Viola Davis (center), with other Agojie preparing for battle.⁴⁹

Each costume was made to represent each warrior. All warriors had different symbols that represented their beliefs.

⁴⁹ Dominique Somda, "Woman King is worth watching: but be aware that its take on history is problematic," *Theconversation.com*, October 5, 2022.

Nanisca's design needed to be different from the rest of the Agojie. Due to her ranking, the more elaborate the design. As for the others, fabrics with metallic embroidery were used. Most importantly, the use of shells was part of the intricate design and a historical gesture the Agojie had in their clothing. Phillips integrated cowry shells into the movie's costumes. "When the warriors won battles, the king would give them as gifts, or he would give the shells as jewelry," she notes. Phillips designed a sash and headpiece with cowry shells for Davis' Gen. Nanisca, while other warriors had the shells woven into their head jewelry, armbands, belts or pouches."⁵⁰ Another aesthetic difference between the Agojie and Dora Milaje was their movements and fighting styles, and weaponry. The *Woman King's* fight choreographer, Jénel Stevens, explains how the movie's Agojie warriors differ from the Black Panther's Dora Milaje. The Agojie and the fictional Dora Milaje were given different fighting styles and movements because of the purpose of their projects. The Agojie were more direct and "functional" as there was "no fantasy to it," as their movements were designed for "killing somebody else."⁵¹ Stevens describes how all moments of the Agojie are in sync. Each movement is connected to each other and followed by each other. Each warrior emphasizes different movements and weapons that allow the Agojie to move without any flaws. In the film, *The Woman King*, the actors had to learn and train a fighting system that comes out of the Philippines called Kali. Leaning on Kali, the actors emphasize a variety of both impact and edged weapons, as well as dramatic joint locks and grappling.⁵²

⁵⁰ Jazz Tangcay, "The Woman King: How Costume Designer Gersha Phillips Relied on African Artisans to Create Warrior Costumes," *Varitey.com*, September 9, 2022.

⁵¹ Sarah Shachat, "Tailored Stuntwork on The Woman King Turned Each Character Into a Warrior," *Indiewire.com*, November 22, 2022.

⁵² Sarah Shachat, "Tailored Stuntwork on The Woman King Turned Each Character Into a Warrior," *Indiewire.com*, November 22, 2022.



Figure 9: Lashana Lynch in a fighting scene.⁵³

For the Agojie their weaponry, not only consisted of a machete as their main weapon, but the Agojie used their nails and weight to fight off the enemies. Producer Cathy Schulman explains how the Agojie used their nails and weight to fight off the enemies. “The kind of things they do to prepare are really quite incredible,” Schulman said. “They sharpen their nails into points. They learn how to use their own strength and their own body weight to take down numerous men for every one woman who stands.”⁵⁴ The machete, similar to their attire, was personalized to the warrior. The *Woman King* shows how the Agojie trained and fought with the machetes. Weapons coordinator Prince-Bythewood, mentions how each machete had “beautifully detailed art”⁵⁵ on the handle that was personalized for the warrior. The Agojie were spiritual,

⁵³ *The Woman King*, 1:26:36.

⁵⁴ Fred Topel, “The Woman King: 4 Ways the Real Agojie Woman Defeated Male Armies,” *Showbizcheatsheet.com*, December 13, 2022.

⁵⁵ Fred Topel, “The Woman King: 4 Ways the Real Agojie Women Defeated Male Armies,” *Showbizcheatsheet.com*, December 13, 2022.

but what is fascinating is how personal they made weapons, and clothing. That is something that is not translated over to *Black Panther* Dora Milaje. The Dora Milaje, a team of Wakandan women trained from birth to be some of the best fighters in the world when it comes to martial arts, hand-to-hand combat, and weaponry.⁵⁶ The Dora Milaje primary choice of weapon was the spear. Similar to Agojie, the Dora Milaje use their weight strategically and outthink their opponents combining speed, flexibility, and skill to outwit opponents to win.⁵⁷ Spear, also known as the sonic spear, is made out of vibranium, giving the Dora Milaje the upper-hand then that to the Agojie. In the film, Killmonger (Michael B. Jordan) describes the spear as a “handheld sonic cannon powerful enough to stop a tank.”⁵⁸ The capability of the spear is like no other. It is slender in size and easily collapsible; the spear is incredibly resistant.



Figure 10: Danai Gurira (left), Lupita Nyong'o, and Florence Kasumba; *Black Panther*, 2018.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ “The Woman King,” *Historyvshollywood.com*, accessed May 22, 2023

⁵⁷ Jeanine T. Abraham, “Wakanda Forever and Exploring the Dora Milaje’s Beauty of Combat,” *Blackgirlnerds.com*, accessed May 22, 2023.

⁵⁸ *Black Panther*, (2018), Marvel Studios, 1:41:47.

⁵⁹ Jamie Broadnax, “Get to know the Dora Milaje, Black Panther’s mighty women warriors,” *Vox.com*, February 21, 2018.

The sonic spear is incredibly resistant, and capable of piercing through other solid materials and withstand the impact of a SUV coming at full speed.⁶⁰ As previously mentioned, the Dora Milaje had the upper-hand then that to the Agojie. One would say the suits the Dora Milaje wear should also be taken into consideration as a form of weapon. The use of vibranium allowed the Dora Milaje to succeed in ways that the Agojie could not. However, although both the Agojie and Dora Milaje share differences and similarities, the true constant between both warrior groups is that their true weapon would be themselves.

Conclusion

The Woman King is inspired by the true story of real warriors and protectors of the Dahomey Kingdom. Although there were aspects dramatized for entertainment, Prince-Bythewood sought to be as accurate as possible to provide a platform for these warriors of nineteenth century Africa. First and foremost, *The Woman King* illustrates what the Agojie experienced in the nineteenth century during the slave trade and combating surrounding kingdoms such as the Oyo. As they were real-life warriors notable for their ferocity in battle, the Agojie's tactics, weaponry, and fighting styles were designed to be historically accurate and efficient. Both *The Woman King* and *Black Panther* feature African women in warrior roles generally portrayed by men, especially in the historical action-epic genre. Both movies attempt to decolonize Black/African culture and representation of Black history in film. Furthermore, directors Coogler and Prince-Bythewood attempt to highlight Africa as a symbol of strength to counter assumptions of weakness due to its history of colonization, which they feel primarily has failed to take account of the modern racist view of African people. The kingdom of Wakanda in *Black Panther* reinforces Africa as a monolith and uncolonized, thus a hidden

⁶⁰ "Vibranium Spear," *Marvelcinematicuniverse.fandom.com*, accessed May 23, 2023. https://marvelcinematicuniverse.fandom.com/wiki/Vibranium_Spear

gem within Africa. *The Woman King* provides a semi-accurate representation of the Agojie; however, the Dora Milaje provides a fictional representation of the Agojie in the Marvel Universe. Both depictions of the Agojie create a space in filmography for black voices and histories, which gives room for a more inclusive and diverse industry. Prince-Bythewood and Coogler continue to create films where black actors are shot in proper lighting and stories that push against stereotypes. It is through these two film adaptations that mainstream audiences are able to restore black women's voices to history while using these discoveries to transform present-day gender relations.⁶¹

⁶¹ Stefan Berger, Heiko Feldner, and Kevin Passmore, *Writing History: Theory and Practice*, (Bloomsbury Academic, 2018).

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History in the Making

In Memoriam

David McCullough: Accidental Historian

By George “Matt” Patino



Figure 1. David McCullough (1933-2022), Courtesy of Brett Weinstein, Wikimedia Commons¹

History, I like to think, is a larger way of looking at life. It is a source of strength, of inspiration. It is about who we are and what we stand for and is essential to our understanding of what our own role should be in our times. History, as

¹ Brett Weinstein, *David McCullough Speaking at Emory University*, photograph, accessed April 25, 2023, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:McCullough_1.jpg#file

can't be said too often, is human. It is about people, and they speak to us across the years.²

The preceding paragraph is how David McCullough (1933-2022) opened the introduction of his book, *The American Spirit: Who We Are and What We Stand For* (2017). McCullough venerated the stories of our past throughout his life, and although his profession was writing, his avocation was History.

History can be the tonic to cure our collective ills, the salve to heal our wounds if—and only if—we accept the humanity (good and bad) that shaped our past. “History” comes from the Greek word *historia* (inquiry), and McCullough endeavored to channel his inquisitiveness into his narratives. It was McCullough’s curiosity and his desire to share the stories of our past that drove his career. In an interview with National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Chairperson, Bruce Cole, McCullough said that he writes “the kind of book I would like to read,” and he cited Mary Lee Settle’s quote, “I write to find out.”³

David McCullough’s first book, *The Johnstown Flood: The Incredible Story Behind One of the Most Devastating Disasters America Has Ever Known* (1968), made him a popular historian, a label that brought a certain level of criticism throughout his career from professional academic historians. For example, in a review of McCullough’s book, *John Adams* (2001), Sean Wilentz, a professor of History at Princeton University, criticized McCullough’s writing as “severely lacking in evaluation – too much narrative, not enough historical insight.”⁴ McCullough faced

² David G. McCullough, *The American Spirit: Who We Are and What We Stand For* (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2018). xiii.

³ “The Title Always Comes Last,” David McCullough Interview (National Endowment for the Humanities), accessed December 26, 2022, <https://web.archive.org/web/20080511114908/http://www.neh.gov/howeare/mccullough/interview.html>

⁴ James R. Allen, “Keeping History Alive: David McCullough and the Debate Between Popular and Academic History,” DigitalCommons@CalPoly (California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, May 2010), <https://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/histsp/3>

other reproaches from the academy, but none could fault his writing. He fully understood the beauty and weight of language used in creating narratives that captured a reader's attention. For McCullough, the stories were more important than the historiography, and a popular historian could serve the field as much as an academic.⁵

David Gaub McCullough was born to Ruth (née Rankin) and Christian Hax McCullough Sr. on July 7, 1933, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.⁶ Christian ran a successful family electrical supply business (McCullough Electric Company)—founded in 1904—which allowed David and his three brothers “a marvelous childhood” and an opportunity to explore many interests.⁷ David McCullough's interests included sports, drama, journalism, and painting. Growing up, he imagined himself in several vocations: painter, architect, actor, lawyer, politician, actor, or doctor. However, McCullough was sure of two things; he *did not* want to be a businessman, and he *did* want to live in New York City.⁸

In 1951, McCullough enrolled at Yale University, majoring in English literature. While at Yale, he befriended the playwright Thornton Wilder, a friendship that influenced a young McCullough. Wilder taught McCullough that he should be

⁵ Popular history is usually written as a novel, making it easier for a non-historian to consume the material. However, some regard academic history as superior to popular history for its contribution to the scholarship of a specific topic.

⁶ “David McCullough: Recording the Drama of History,” Academy of Achievement, August 8, 2022, <https://achievement.org/achiever/david-mccullough/#biography>, Jonathan Newcomb, “David McCullough: Winner of the 1995 Distinguished Contribution to American Letters Award,” National Book Foundation, Presenter of National Book Awards (National Book Foundation, February 9, 1996), https://web.archive.org/web/20080415045419/http://www.nationalbook.org/nba/acceptspeech_dmccullough.html

⁷ “Christian Hax McCullough Sr. (1899-1989),” Find a Grave, accessed December 26, 2022, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/122473340/christian-hax-mccullough>, “David McCullough: Recording the Drama of History.”

⁸ “David McCullough: Recording the Drama of History.”

passionate about his subjects and write with “an air of freedom in the storyline,” whether fictional or not.⁹ In 1954, McCullough began his writing (and editing) career with several publications, including *Time*, *Life*, *Sports Illustrated*, and *American Heritage Magazines*, before moving on to the United States Information Agency.¹⁰ In the same year, McCullough married Rosalee Barnes and graduated with honors in 1955.

McCullough discovered his affinity for writing and research in equal measure while working for the magazines and the U.S. Information Agency. After that breakthrough, he said, “I knew I had found what I wanted to do in my life.”¹¹ Having been raised in Western Pennsylvania, McCullough was interested in the deadly 1889 flood in Johnstown. His fascination with the incident led to his first book, *The Johnstown Flood: The Incredible Story Behind One of the Most Devastating Disasters America Has Ever Known* (1968), which took three years of nights and weekends to complete. The book’s success allowed McCullough to quit his “day job” at the U.S. Information Agency and concentrate on writing histories and biographies full-time.

The topic of McCullough’s sophomore effort came to him “accidentally.”¹² As a Brooklyn resident, he frequently strode the borough’s namesake bridge without giving the structure much thought. However, a conversation with another writer and an engineer about the bridge’s origin sparked McCullough’s interest, and he began work on *The Great Bridge: The Epic Story of the Building of the Brooklyn Bridge* (1972).¹³ McCullough opens his

⁹ Neda Ulaby and Elizabeth Blair, “Pulitzer Prize Winning Historian David McCullough Has Died,” NPR (National Public Radio, August 10, 2022), <https://www.npr.org/2022/08/08/1116337415/historian-david-mccullough-died>, Daniel Lewis, “David McCullough, Best-Selling Explorer of America’s Past, Dies at 89,” *The New York Times* (*The New York Times*, August 8, 2022), <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/08/books/david-mccullough-dead.html>

¹⁰ “The Title Always Comes Last,” Lewis, “David McCullough, Best-Selling Explorer of America’s Past, Dies at 89.”

¹¹ “The Title Always Comes Last.”

¹² Allen, “Keeping History Alive.”

¹³ Allen, “Keeping History Alive.”

book by introducing John Augustus Roebling and his “consultants” as they planned to build the Brooklyn Bridge,

They met at his request on at least six different occasions, beginning in February 1869. With everyone present, there were just nine in all—the seven distinguished consultants he had selected; his oldest son, Colonel Washington Roebling, who kept the minutes; and himself, the intense, enigmatic John Augustus Roebling, wealthy wire rope manufacturer of Trenton, New Jersey, and builder of unprecedented suspension bridges.¹⁴

In his review, Gerald Carson of *The New York Times* hailed the “sound intuitive sense” of McCullough’s narrative style. In addition, Carson noted that McCullough conveyed “a vivid sense of what the Brooklyn Bridge has meant to the passing generations.”¹⁵ Such praise helped establish McCullough’s reputation as a storyteller and popular social historian.

McCullough began earning recognition from the literary community with his next book, *The Path Between the Seas: The Creation of the Panama Canal, 1870-1914* (1977), which earned the 1978 National Book Award for History.¹⁶ Next, McCullough took the 1982 National Book Award for Autobiography/Biography

¹⁴ David McCullough, “The Great Bridge: The Epic Story of the Building of the Brooklyn Bridge,” Google Books (Google), 21, accessed April 13, 2023, <https://books.google.com/books?id=bOM93rb22YEC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>

¹⁵ Gerald Carson, “The Great Bridge,” *The New York Times* (The New York Times, October 15, 1972), <https://www.nytimes.com/1972/10/15/archives/the-great-bridge-by-david-mccullough-illustrated-404-pp-new-york.html>

¹⁶ “National Book Awards 1978,” National Book Foundation, March 6, 2018, <https://www.nationalbook.org/awards-prizes/national-book-awards-1978/?cat=history>

for his fourth volume, *Mornings on Horseback* (1981), chronicling the life of a young Theodore Roosevelt and his family.¹⁷

With his sixth book, *Truman* (1992), McCullough reached the pinnacle of literary achievement, winning his first Pulitzer Prize (1993) in the Biography, Autobiography, or Memoir by an American author category.¹⁸ However, along with the honors came reproach. A review of *Truman* by Alan Brinkley of *The New York Times* praised McCullough's "sound, thorough narrative of the major events of the Truman Presidency." But Brinkley chastised the popular historian for failing to engage "in the debates over...the decision to use atomic bombs in Japan...the cold war...the North Korean invasion of South Korea [or]...Truman's policy in Vietnam."¹⁹ In 1953, when President Harry S. Truman left office, he was—according to Frank Gannon of *The Wall Street Journal*—“reviled by many of the country’s leading historians.” Gannon credits McCullough’s portrayal of the 33rd President as the “catalyst” that changed public opinion about Truman.²⁰ Gannon’s assessment is a testament to David McCullough’s popularity, not only as a writer but also as a historian.

McCullough’s follow-up work, *John Adams* (2001), earned the author a second Pulitzer Prize (2002) in the Biography, Autobiography, or Memoir by an American author category and a growing chorus of critics.²¹ In his review of *John Adams*, Richard

¹⁷ “National Book Awards 1982,” National Book Foundation, July 30, 2018, <https://www.nationalbook.org/awards-prizes/national-book-awards-1982/>

¹⁸ “The Pulitzer Prizes: Biography,” The Pulitzer Prizes, accessed March 16, 2023, <https://www.pulitzer.org/prize-winners-by-category/222>

¹⁹ Alan Brinkley, “Work Hard, Trust in God, Have No Fear,” *The New York Times* (The New York Times, June 21, 1992), <https://www.nytimes.com/1992/06/21/books/work-hard-trust-in-god-have-no-fear.html>

²⁰ Frank Gannon, “‘The Trials of Harry S. Truman’ Review: Giving Them Hell, Getting It Too,” *The Wall Street Journal* (Dow Jones & Company, March 22, 2022), <https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-trials-of-harry-s-truman-review-giving-them-hell-getting-it-too-11647987509>

²¹ “The Pulitzer Prizes: Biography,” The Pulitzer Prizes, accessed March 16, 2023, <https://www.pulitzer.org/prize-winners-by-category/222>

N. Rosenfeld denounced McCullough's reverence for his subject, "[the] biography of Adams partakes of the aura of autobiography, and, in doing so, it raises important questions of identity and verity."²² C. Bradley Thompson's review of the title casts McCullough as Adams' long-missing publicist, more interested in popularizing the founder than examining his political ideology.²³

McCullough's most ardent literary critic, Sean Wilentz, remarked that *John Adams* served as an example of the popular historian yielding to public demand for the heroic tales of the past.²⁴ Further, Wilentz suggested that McCullough's curious fascination with Adams led the author to misattribute a quote in the biography.²⁵ McCullough's error was minor compared to the plagiarism charges leveled against other popular historians—Stephen E. Ambrose and Joseph Ellis—but it was enough for academics to further the divide between genres. Eric Foner, a history professor at Columbia University—who has enjoyed his own commercial success—said, "I think there are a lot of popular writers—Garry Wills, Taylor Branch—you don't hear these complaints about."²⁶ Foner articulated his expectation that popular historians take responsibility whenever "they realize they've made mistakes," but he also wanted "Ellis...and the others to continue writing books."²⁷ Interestingly Wills and Branch's credentials as "trained" historians could be questioned; Wills holds a Ph.D. in classics from Yale University (1961), and Branch a Master's degree in Public Administration from Princeton University (1970). Meanwhile, Ambrose received a Ph.D. in history from the

²² Richard N. Rosenfeld, "The Adams Tyranny," *Harper's Magazine*, September 2001, pp. 82-86, <https://search-ebshost-com.libproxy.lib.csusb.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=5043467&site=ehost-live>

²³ C. Bradley Thompson, "John Adams," *Claremont Review of Books* II, no. 2 (2002), <https://claremontreviewofbooks.com/john-adams/>

²⁴ Allen, "Keeping History Alive."

²⁵ Allen, "Keeping History Alive."

²⁶ Hillel Italie, "Historians Under Fire," CBS News (CBS Interactive, January 24, 2002), <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/historians-under-fire/>

²⁷ Italie, "Historians Under Fire."

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University of Wisconsin-Madison (1963), and Ellis a Ph.D. in history from Yale University (1969).

McCullough shrugged off the criticisms regarding his lack of historiographic “training” or academic position because neither was as vital to him as the subject of history. In a 1998 commencement speech at the University of Massachusetts in Boston, McCullough said,

The lessons of history are manifold. Nothing happens in isolation. Everything that happens has consequences. We are all part of a larger stream of events, past, present, and future. We are all the beneficiaries of those who went before us—who built the cathedrals, who braved the unknown, who gave of their time and service, and who kept faith in the possibilities of the mind and the human spirit.²⁸

In a 2002 interview with Bruce Cole, chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), McCullough defined his work in terms that might confound his academic critics—and possibly his publishers,

I feel I’m working in a tradition that goes all the way back to Thucydides or Gibbon, if you want. They weren’t academic historians either. I can fairly be called an amateur because I do what I do, in the original sense of the word—for love, because I love it. On the other hand, I think that those of us who make a living writing history can also be called true professionals.²⁹

²⁸ McCullough, *The American Spirit*. 57.

²⁹ “David McCullough,” The National Endowment for the Humanities, 2003, <https://www.neh.gov/about/awards/jefferson-lecture/david-mccullough-biography>

To that end, McCullough saw no difference between academic and popular historians. What separated McCullough from his contemporaries is that he considered himself a writer who enjoyed telling stories about the past.³⁰ As he saw it, a significant part of McCullough's job was to "make [history] as interesting and human" as possible.³¹ An accomplishment that Arnita Jones, former Executive Director of the American Historical Association (AHA), championed, "I've always been an advocate of historians trying to reach a public audience."³² Regarding the criticisms McCullough and other writers faced, Jones added, "I would hope the next generation of historians will not be dissuaded."³³

David McCullough passed away at his home in Massachusetts on August 7, 2022.³⁴ Unfortunately, it is not likely that the literary void he left will soon be filled. But perhaps one day, a fledgling writer, curious about history, poring over monographs and wandering through the archives will discover a good story to share and find themselves "accidentally" becoming a historian.

³⁰ Gerardo Orlando, "David McCullough: Painting with Words," *The History Pages* (The History Pages, January 1, 2021), <https://www.thehistorypages.com/2018/12/01/david-mccullough-painting-with-words/>

³¹ "David McCullough," The National Endowment for the Humanities.

³² Italic, "Historians Under Fire."

³³ Italic, "Historians Under Fire."

³⁴ Hillel Italic, "David McCullough, Pulitzer-Winning Historian, Dies at 89," AP NEWS (Associated Press, August 8, 2022), <https://apnews.com/article/david-mccullough-historian-dies-7abe5997da74f30b1eab11e36b308fe3>

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Author Bio

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He plans to teach at the Community College level while writing and publishing in the popular history genre. Matt has worked as a writing tutor at Crafton Hills College and the University of Redlands, as a Supplemental Instruction (SI) Leader at CSUSB, and in the Heritage Room of the A.K. Smiley Public Library in Redlands. Matt would like to thank Evy Zermeno and Dr. Tiffany Jones for their support, guidance, and encouragement during the writing and editing process.



History in the Making

Thich Nhat Hanh

By Erin Herklotz

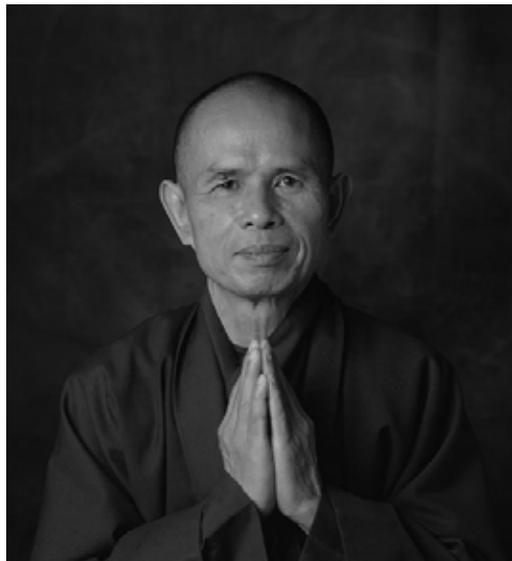


Figure 1. Thich Nhat Hanh (1926-2022). Courtesy of Lindsay Kyte and the Lion's Roar Staff.¹

Throughout Thich Nhat Hanh's (1926-2022) life, he practiced "Engaged Buddhism," and this made his teachings personable and highly sought after throughout the Western world. He was a legendary Zen master who came to be known as "the father of mindfulness."² Thich Nhat Hanh was born with the name Nguyen

¹ Lindsay Kyte and Lion's Roar Staff. "The Life of Thich Nhat Hanh." Lions Roar, January 21, 2022. <https://www.lionsroar.com/the-life-of-thich-nhat-hanh/>.

² Miranda Bryant, "From MLK to Silicon Valley, How the World Fell for 'Father of Mindfulness,'" The Guardian, January 22, 2022,

Xuan Baoon on October 11, 1926, in Hue, Vietnam, and made his transition from this earth on January 22, 2022.³ Thich Nhat Hanh left behind a powerful legacy when he passed, and his teachings are something to be remembered and studied for years to come. Thich Nhat Hanh was born into a large family with five siblings; he was the second youngest. His father, Nguyen Dinh Phuc, was an official for land reform in the Imperial Administration, and his mother was named Tran Thi Di.⁴ One of the main principles Thich Nhat Hanh created was “Engaged Buddhism,” which is used to instill traditional Buddhist beliefs and to engage in social and political issues worldwide.⁵ Engaged Buddhism uses the teachings of the Buddha to improve society through meditation and awareness of the world. It is meant to serve as guidelines for how to live daily life, focusing on creating solid social awareness. His teachings made him popular in Western culture because his focus had real-world applications to improve the human experience and help relieve suffering. In Buddhism, suffering is at the forefront of their teachings; practitioners learn to gain the perspective of turning suffering into a path of enlightenment.

One of Thich Nhat Hanh’s earliest childhood memories involves seeing a picture of a smiling Buddha.⁶ This would jumpstart his passion for wanting to be a Buddhist monk. In Thich Nhat Hanh’s 2016 book, *At Home in the World*, he shares a fond story of his mother and being given a cookie to eat when he was a little boy. Thich Nhat Hanh remembers eating that cookie slowly

<https://web.archive.org/web/20220122200253/https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jan/22/from-mlk-to-silicon-valley-how-the-world-fell-for-father-of-minfulness>

³ Sister True Dedication and Su Co Dinh Nghiem, eds., “Thich Nhat Hanh: Extended Biography,” Plum Village, accessed May 25, 2023, <https://plumvillage.org/thich-nhat-hanh/biography/thich-nhat-hanh-full-biography/#earlylife>

⁴ Dedication and Nghiem, “Thich Nhat Hanh: Extended Biography.”

⁵ Ann Gleig, “Engaged Buddhism,” *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion*, June 28, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.013.755>

⁶ Lindsay Kyte, “The Life of Thich Nhat Hanh,” Lions Roar, October 11, 2019, <https://www.lionsroar.com/the-life-of-thich-nhat-hanh/>

and savoring every bite. He uses this story in his book to demonstrate how people should practice mindfulness. Thich Nhat Hanh states, “It is possible to eat our meals as slowly and joyfully as I ate the cookie of my childhood. Maybe you have the impression that you have lost the cookie of your childhood, but I am sure it is still there, somewhere in your heart. Everything is still there, and if you really want it, you can find it.”⁷ Taking time to enjoy the littlest things in life can make all the difference; sometimes, people forget to take that time and enjoy the little things in life.

Thich Nhat Hanh, when he was just twelve years old, wanted to walk the path toward becoming a Buddhist monk and follow in the footsteps of his older brother. Thich Nhat Hanh’s parents were hesitant about him being so young and joining the monastery on the road to becoming a monk. At the age of just sixteen, that dream became a reality. He became a novice monk, and in 1951, he took on his full vows.⁸

During the Vietnam War in 1968, Thich Nhat Hanh shared his story of the bombing of Saigon near the School of Youth for Social Services campus, where he was the school’s director. Thich Nhat Hanh remembers helping the injured get to safety:

In this desperate situation, we had to evacuate the seriously wounded from our campus. But to do so, we had to cross the battlefield to bring them to the hospital. We decided to use the five-colored Buddhist flag to replace the Red Cross Flag. The monks and nuns put on their *sanghati*, their monastic ceremonial robes, and carried out the wounded. The Buddhist flag and the *sanghati* robes signaled we were a peaceful group.⁹

⁷ Thich Nhat Hanh, *At Home in the World: Stories and Essential Teachings from a Monk’s Life* (Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press, 2019). 12.

⁸ Kyte, “The Life of Thich Nhat Hanh,”

⁹ Nhat Hanh, *At Home in the World*. 69.

Being that close to danger and risking one's life for the lives of others is extremely brave and compassionate. Thich Nhat Hanh's selflessness is one of the great inspirations to live up to. After this event, Thich Nhat Hanh replied, "In a situation like that, you have to be extremely mindful. Sometimes you have to react quickly while remaining calm. If you are angry or suspicious, you cannot do it. You have to be clear-minded."¹⁰ Not many people could handle the bloodshed of war and remain calm, but Thich Nhat Hanh understood that if he showed fear, that would elevate panic, and chaos would ensue.

Unfortunately, due to Thich Nhat Hanh's public dismay against the war in Vietnam, he was exiled for over forty years and was only allowed to return in 2005 to visit. He was, however, given political asylum in France, which is where he started his first western monastery, Plum Village, in 1982.¹¹ The French government granted him asylum and an *apatride* (stateless) travel document, which means he did not belong to any country.¹² Exile was extremely difficult for the first few years for Thich Nhat Hanh. He shares, "Although I was already a forty-year-old monk with many disciples, I had still not yet found my true home."¹³ One can only imagine how hard it would be to leave behind family, friends, and birthplace. However, Thich Nhat Hanh did not think of exile as suffering. He states,

People think I was suffering because I wasn't allowed to go back to my home in Vietnam. But that's not the case. When I was finally allowed to return, after almost forty years of exile, it was a joy to be able to offer the teachings and practices of mindfulness and Engaged Buddhism to the monks, nuns, and laypeople there; and it was a joy to have time to talk to artists, writers, and scholars.

¹⁰ Nhat Hanh, *At Home in the World*, 69.

¹¹ Dedication and Nghiem, "Thich Nhat Hanh: Extended Biography."

¹² Nhat Hanh, *At Home in the World*, 11.

¹³ Nhat Hanh, *At Home in the World*, 11.

Nevertheless, when it was time to leave my native country again, I did not suffer.¹⁴

Thich Nhat Hanh would say suffering is a part of life: one cannot have darkness without light, and one can create a home anywhere. It is all about perspective; a person can choose to suffer or turn bad thoughts into positive ones.

During the Vietnam War in 1965, Thich Nhat Hanh wrote to Martin Luther King Jr. (1929-1968) about the importance of nonviolence and peaceful protests in Vietnam, arguing that this was an act of love. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is best known for his “I Have a Dream” speech and his Civil Rights activism. Dr. King believed in non-violent resistance when it came to fighting racism. Dr. King and Thich Nhat Hanh both agreed that non-violence was the way to positive change. Thich Nhat Hanh enlightened Dr. King on self-immolation: “To burn ourselves like that was not an act of violence. It was an act of compassion, an act of peace. The suffering of the monk who burns himself to convey a message of love and compassion—is of the same nature as the act of Jesus Christ dying on the cross, dying with no hate, no anger, only with compassion, leaving behind a passionate call for peace, for brotherhood.”¹⁵ This was a good comparison between Buddhist monks and Jesus to say we are all humans and that we need to band together to stop the destruction of the war for the betterment of all men. Thich Nhat Hanh, in his book *Lotus in a Sea of Fire*, explains why Buddhist monks burn themselves: “In particular, he wanted to correct two likely misunderstandings: first, the misunderstanding that it was a form of suicide and second, the misunderstanding that it was an act of protest.”¹⁶ Burning oneself was supposed to be looked at as almost an awakening. In the

¹⁴ Nhat Hanh, *At Home in the World*, 123.

¹⁵ Nhat Hanh, *At Home in the World*, 72.

¹⁶ Chris Goto-Jones, “Understanding Self-Immolation in Buddhism after Wynn Bruce’s Earth Day Action,” *The Conversation*, November 3, 2022, <https://theconversation.com/understanding-self-immolation-in-buddhism-after-wynn-bruces-earth-day-action-182007>

Buddhist religion, fire plays a significant role: it can be considered rebirth and even used in ceremonies. When a person's flame burns out, another one can ignite.

In 1966, a year after Thich Nhat Hanh wrote Dr. King, the two met in Chicago.¹⁷ They believed many things in common; they worked in organizations to help people in conflict find non-violent solutions to those problems. Thich Nhat Hanh believed in Engaged Buddhism and used it to engage in social and political issues throughout the world, whereas Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. practiced non-violence during the civil rights movement and gave a speech on the Vietnam War. Both men became good friends and worked together to create true peace on earth: "We agreed that the true enemy of man is not man. Our enemy is not outside of us. Our true enemy is the anger, hatred, and discrimination that is found in the hearts and minds of men."¹⁸ At this time, Thich Nhat Hanh's teachings began to expand rapidly in the Western world, and both men knew that non-violence was the only way to end suffering.

Six months after their first meeting, in 1967, Dr. King nominated Thich Nhat Hanh for a Nobel Peace Prize, stating, "His ideas for peace, if applied would build a monument to ecumenism, to world brotherhood, to humanity."¹⁹ Dr. King meant a lot to Thich Nhat Hanh, which was evident in a compliment given to Dr. King at a Geneva conference later in 1967: "Martin, do you know something? In Vietnam they call you a bodhisattva, an enlightened being trying to awaken other living beings and help them move towards more compassion and understanding."²⁰ This was the last time the two talked because a few months later, Dr. King was murdered. Thich Nhat Hanh was devastated by the loss of a dear friend, and he wanted to continue Dr. King's legacy by vowing to continue building up the community.

In the 2022 issue of *History in the Making*, Cecelia Smith wrote an excellent memorial piece on bell hooks, who passed away

¹⁷ Nhat Hanh, *At Home in the World*, 72.

¹⁸ Nhat Hanh, *At Home in the World*, 72.

¹⁹ Dedication and Nghiem, "Thich Nhat Hanh: Extended Biography."

²⁰ Nhat Hanh, *At Home in the World*, 72.

on December 15, 2021.²¹ hooks' birth name was Gloria Jean Watkins, but she chose to go by bell hooks to honor her late grandmother, Bell Blair Hooks.²² The reason why hooks chose not to capitalize any of her names was simple: she wanted people to focus on her message rather than her name.²³ hooks was born in 1952 in Hopkinsville, Kentucky, and, like both Thich Nhat Hanh and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., was one of six children in her family.²⁴ hooks was a writer known for her books on feminism, class, and race. hooks looked at feminism beyond just being white and middle class; she wanted it to include all working-class women.²⁵ hooks' best-selling book published in 1981, titled, *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women on Feminism*, was about the history of slavery and black women's struggles and the dehumanization they faced.²⁶ hooks was also a huge admirer of Thich Nhat Hanh and saw him as a great teacher. She remembers the first thing she ever said to Thich Nhat Hanh when she had the opportunity to meet him. "I'm so angry," hooks shared, to which Thich Nhat Hanh replied without skipping a beat, "Oh, hold on to your anger and use it as compost for your garden."²⁷ hooks' past was filled with suffering during the Civil Rights Movement. Old anger would be transformed into love, which led her to Buddhism and the teaching of Thich Nhat Hanh. hooks shares,

²¹ Cecelia Smith, "In Memoriam: Bell Hooks (1952-2021)," *History in the Making: A Journal of History* 15 (2022): 205–27.

²² Victor Puente, "Good Question: Why Isn't bell hooks' Name Capitalized in Our Coverage?," <https://www.wkyt.com>, February 7, 2023, <https://www.wkyt.com/2023/02/07/good-question-why-isnt-bell-hooks-name-capitalized-our-coverage/>

²³ Puente, "Good Question."

²⁴ Hua Hsu, "The Revolutionary Writing of bell hooks," *The New Yorker*, December 15, 2021, <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/postscript/the-revolutionary-writing-of-bell-hooks>

²⁵ Clay Risen, "bell hooks, Pathbreaking Black Feminist, Dies at 69," *The New York Times*, December 15, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/15/books/bell-hooks-dead.html>

²⁶ Hsu, "The Revolutionary Writing of bell hooks."

²⁷ "bell hooks Tells the Story of the First Time She Met Thich Nhat Hanh," YouTube, December 21, 2017, <https://youtu.be/PEIkPDuBGU0>

At last I had found a world where spirituality and politics could meet, where there was no separation. Indeed, in this world all efforts to end domination, to bring peace and justice, were spiritual practice. I was no longer torn between political struggle and spiritual practice. And here was the radical teacher—a Vietnamese monk living in exile—courageously declaring that “if you have to choose between Buddhism and peace, then you must choose peace.”²⁸

It is interesting that the teacher and student passed within a month of each other. Both of their legacies live on as we remember all the contributions, they both offered the world. hooks and King, in their appreciation for Thich Nhat Hanh’s teachings, served to magnify his message to a broader audience interested in practicing Buddhist teachings, creating a better world, and establishing social justice.

In 1982, Thich Nhat Hanh created the Plum Village monastery in the Dordogne Valley of southwest France. Plum Village was named because of the 1,250 plum trees planted on the property. This became Thich Nhat Hanh’s center for mindfulness and the largest Buddhist center in the West.²⁹ Thich Nhat Hanh believed that with everyday mindfulness and meditation, healing could be distributed around the world, and he aimed at providing people with a place to heal and grow. Thich Nhat Hanh knew how to connect with his students, coining the term “Interbeing” “to describe the way in which everything ‘inter-is’ with everything else.”³⁰ Thich Nhat Hanh taught his students to look with “the eyes of interbeing” to see that there cannot be a sheet of paper

²⁸ bell hooks and Thich Nhat Hanh, “Building a Community of Love,” Lions Roar, March 17, 2017, <https://www.lionsroar.com/bell-hooks-and-thich-nhat-hanh-on-building-a-community-of-love/>

²⁹ Dedication and Nghiem, “Thich Nhat Hanh: Extended Biography.”

³⁰ Dedication and Nghiem, “Thich Nhat Hanh: Extended Biography.”

without clouds, forest, and rain; there cannot be a mother or father without a daughter or son. “Everything coexists,” he explained, “to be is to inter-be. You cannot just be by yourself alone; you have to inter-be with every other thing.”³¹ It is the circle of life concept, where everything relies on one another to stay balanced. Thich Nhat Hanh’s greatest legacy was Plum Village and the people’s lives he touched throughout his lifetime.

On January 22, 2022, at Tu Hieu Temple in Hieu, Vietnam, Thich Nhat Hanh passed away at age ninety-five from complications from a serious brain hemorrhage he suffered in 2014. After his major stroke in 2014, he was non-verbal and lived in silence, only able to use hand signals to communicate with those around him. Thich Nhat Hanh lived every day with mindfulness, stating, “The Buddha taught that there is no birth; there is no death; there is no coming; there is no going; there is no same; there is no different; there is no permanent self; there is no annihilation. We only think there is.”³² He didn’t fear death; he greeted it as if it was an old friend and wanted people to know that he would always be around. Thich Nhat Hanh’s legacy will always be remembered by the books, poems, art, and people he touched. Thich Nhat Hanh, in an expression of “Engaged Buddhism,” which so appealed to a global audience, he would say, “Teaching is not done by talking alone. It is done by how you live your life. My life is my teaching. My life is my message.”³³

³¹ Dedication and Nghiem, “Thich Nhat Hanh: Extended Biography.”

³² Seth Mydans, “Thich Nhat Hanh, Monk, Zen Master and Activist, Dies at 95,” The New York Times, January 21, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/21/world/asia/thich-nhat-hanh-dead.html>

³³ Nhat Hanh, *At Home in the World*, 5.

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Author Bio

Erin Herklotz is currently in the final year of her Bachelor' of Arts degree at California State University, San Bernardino. Her love of history comes from her late father and his passion for their family genealogy. Erin will always remember when her dad took her to Ireland and Wales to visit family landmarks and learn about her history. After completing her bachelor's degree, Erin plans on continuing her education and pursuing a Master of Arts degree, hopefully at CSUSB, with the hopes of becoming an educator. Erin is currently very intrigued when it comes to Scottish, Irish, and Welsh history because it relates to her family's history. She would like to thank her husband, Patrick, for all his love and support throughout her academic career. She would also like to take the time to thank Dr. Murray for believing in her and pushing her to succeed and become the best historian she can be. From the words of her favorite musical, Hamilton, "There's a million things I haven't done but just you wait."



Shireen Abu Akleh

By Devin Gillen



Figure 1. Shireen Abu Akleh (1971-2022). Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.¹

She went into the hearts of every single Palestinian, and I dare say every Arab household because of her touching reporting and the way that she had of bringing to life the reality of Israel's brutal occupation.

- Diana Buttu, Human Rights Lawyer.²

¹ *Al Jazeera*, "Shireen Abu Akleh," Wikimedia Commons, public domain, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Shireen_Abu_Akleh.jpg.

² Mohammad Jamjoom, "Who was Al Jazeera's slain journalist Shireen Abu Akleh?," *Al Jazeera English*, video, 2:51, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YQ2VDJ9W6qs&t=271s&ab_channel=AlJazeeraEnglish.

In Memoriam

I think like every, maybe almost every single Arab person in the Middle East grew up watching her for decades. It just felt like every girl wanted to be her.

- Dalia Hatuqa, reporter and friend of Abu Akleh.³

Shireen Abu Akleh (1971-2022), a senior Palestinian-American journalist at *Al Jazeera (AJ)*, was an iconic Palestinian voice and a household name in the region through her decades of coverage of the Israeli apartheid state. In the early morning of May 11, 2022, Akleh was shot in the back of the head and killed by the Israeli Defense/Occupation Forces (IDF/IOF) shortly after arriving on the scene of a raid in a Jenin refugee camp. At the time of the shooting, Abu Akleh and her colleagues wore helmets and vests that clearly marked them as PRESS. While she was celebrated by and inspired many in the region, especially women, she remained a humble and kind spirit. According to her fellow reporter and friend, Dalia Hatuqa, “Covering what Amnesty International (AI) and others call clear human rights abuses in the occupied Palestinian territories never broke her. It never stopped her from appreciating and enjoying life.”⁴

Born on April 3, 1971, to a Catholic family in East Jerusalem, Shireen’s parents died early, but she pursued an education in Jordan and graduated with a bachelor’s degree in journalism after initially considering architecture.⁵ On her switch

³ Dalia Hatuqa, interview by What Next, *The Killing of Shireen Abu Akleh*, Slate, June 14, 2022, <https://slate.com/transcripts/Tm5KNVFBbHVQVVA1aXIFRkpNcVZiWSt1RzJHbTFjeHYySk45Yk8zWGU4Zz0=>.

⁴ Dalia Hatuqa, “Opinion: My Friend Shireen Abu Akleh told the stories no one else wanted to tell,” CNN Opinion, *CNN*, May 16, 2022, <https://www.cnn.com/2022/05/16/opinions/shireen-abu-akleh-friend-journalist-tribute-hatuqa/index.html>.

⁵ Patrick Kingsley, Raja Abdulrahim, “Killing of Palestinian Journalist: Israeli Police Attack Mourners at Palestinian Journalist’s Funeral,” *Nytimes*, *The New York Times*, May 13, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/05/13/world/shireen-abu-akleh-funeral-israel>.

to journalism, Abu Akleh said, “I chose journalism to be close to the people...It might not be easy to change the reality, but at least I was able to bring their voice to the world.”⁶ Shortly after graduating, she joined the *Voice of Palestine* radio and The Amman Satellite Channel.⁷ She gained American citizenship at a young age staying with family on her mother’s side in New Jersey, and later returned to the United States while producing mini-documentaries for *Al Jazeera* on American society, particularly highlighting the plight of minorities from Washington D.C. to New Mexico.⁸ Her popularity reached international audiences, Hatuqa recalls,

Even in DC, people would stop her in the street asking for a selfie, to which she would happily oblige. She was down to earth and oozed modesty and humility. Of course, it would be impossible for her to not know what she meant to so many people, but she never let it get to her or go to her head.

Abu Akleh joined *Al Jazeera* in 1997 as one of the network’s first field correspondents and quickly became a prominent feature in everyday Arab homes during the Second Intifada (2000-2005).⁹ Nidaa Ibrahim, a fellow *Al Jazeera* English correspondent, remembers the time and Shireen’s popularity,

I grew up as a teenager in the second Palestinian Intifada...Shireen [and other *Al Jazeera* journalists] brought us a new sense, a new meaning and a new feeling when it comes to news coverage of people

⁶ Kingsley, “Killing of Palestinian Journalist: Israeli Police Attack Mourners.”

⁷ Kingsley, “Killing of Palestinian Journalist: Israeli Police Attack Mourners.”

⁸ Kingsley, “Killing of Palestinian Journalist: Israeli Police Attack Mourners.”

⁹ “Al-Jazeera’s Shireen Abu Akleh: pioneering Palestinian reporter,” *France24*, May 11, 2022,

<https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20220511-al-jazeera-s-shireen-abu-akleh-pioneering-palestinian-reporter>

In Memoriam

living under occupation...that our narrative was being carried to the whole world. The very fact that they were reporting the Palestinian narrative to the world made them celebrities.¹⁰

Her reporting was sympathetic to the Palestinian plight under occupation, Boudoir Hassan, a freelance journalist in Jerusalem, said,

She was the voice that actually conveyed what was going on, that broke all the divisions that the Israelis tried to create, when there were systematic attempts to divide Palestinians...she was one of those who helped shape our country, our political consciousness.¹¹

Shireen Abu Akleh's sign-off, ending each report with her name and the city she was reporting from, became so iconic many young Palestinian girls emulated her style and practiced it in the mirror.¹² As Fayha Shalash, a journalist for *Al Aqsa Radio*, recounts, "because we were under Israeli attack. I was in 9th grade when I started watching the news, and remember seeing her reports. I used to mimic her style and tone in front of my family."¹³ Shalash chose to follow in Shireen's footsteps, becoming a journalist herself, as did many others "influenced by Shireen's reporting or inspired by her journalism classes at Birzeit University."¹⁴

Beyond inspiring many young women and hopeful reporters to imitate her words, apparently even the IDF knew of her iconic sign-off and likely mocked her words themselves. As Hatuqa reports, "when Israeli forces slapped curfews on us in

¹⁰ "Al-Jazeera's Shireen Abu Akleh: pioneering Palestinian reporter," *France24*.

¹¹ "Al-Jazeera's Shireen Abu Akleh: pioneering Palestinian reporter."

¹² "Al-Jazeera's Shireen Abu Akleh: pioneering Palestinian reporter."

¹³ "Al-Jazeera's Shireen Abu Akleh: pioneering Palestinian reporter."

¹⁴ "Al-Jazeera's Shireen Abu Akleh: pioneering Palestinian reporter."

2002, they would go around in their jeeps and mimic her through a bullhorn: “Stay inside. This is Shireen Abu Akleh, *Al Jazeera*, Ramallah.”¹⁵ Twenty-one years before lodging a precisely placed bullet in her skull, the occupation force reportedly recognized some degree of Shireen Abu Akleh’s importance to the Palestinian people. Their use of her call-off can either be charitably interpreted as some genuine attempt to convince Palestinians to stay out of the danger the occupation force represented (i.e., don’t come outside or we will shoot you) or a purposeful mockery of a prominent journalist whose name it was understood would be widely recognized amongst the Palestinian population.

She is survived by her niece, Lina Abu Akleh, who got her Master’s degree in International Studies from the University of San Francisco, and now focuses on human rights, governance, and justice to advocate for justice for Shireen.¹⁶ Lina remembers her aunt fondly, like Hatuqa; she says, “she was a very fun person- not as serious as she appeared on TV.”¹⁷ Despite her aversion to violence and gore, she liked crime shows, murder mysteries, and the Netflix show *Black Mirror*; as Lina recounts, “She even had this thing where she would skip all the way towards the end so she would know it’s gonna be a happy ending.”¹⁸

Shireen is widely recognized for gaining prestige during her coverage of the Second Intifada, but to understand the roots of that conflict and the ongoing humanitarian crisis that ultimately took her life, the history of the preceding Intifada must be understood.

¹⁵ Hatuqa, “Opinion: My Friend Shireen Abu Akleh told the stories no one else wanted to tell.”

¹⁶ Sanya Mansoor, “Niece of Slain Al Jazeera Journalist Shireen Abu Akleh on Justice for Her Family,” *Time*, July 15, 2022, <https://time.com/6197706/qa-lina-abu-akleh-palestine-israel/>.

¹⁷ Mansoor, “Niece of Slain Al Jazeera Journalist Shireen Abu Akleh on Justice for Her Family.”

¹⁸ Mansoor, “Niece of Slain Al Jazeera Journalist.”

The First Intifada (1987-1993)

The roots of the First Intifada stemmed from Israeli Prime Minister, and founder of the right-wing Likud Party, Menachem Begin's (1913-1992) intensification of settlement construction in the West Bank, occupied by Israeli forces since the end of the Six Day War (1967).¹⁹ These policies increased the Israeli settler population from roughly 770 to 5,960 annual immigrants, as well as changed the locations of the settlements; "Now they were often deliberately planned to abut Arab communities and to take their lands, visible threats designed from Ariel Sharon's [1928-2004] point of view to intimidate Arabs to force them to leave."²⁰ The seizure of land in the occupied West Bank for Israeli settlement—a process of annexation—was illegal under the spirit of 1967 United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 242, which called for the "withdrawal of Israel from territories occupied in the recent conflict" and a "just settlement of the [Palestinian] refugee problem."²¹ However, the absence of a definitive "the" prefacing the "territories occupied" allowed Israel to argue that as long as it leaves some of the occupied territories, then it is in compliance with the law as it has withdrawn from "territories occupied" but not *the* territories occupied.²²

Meanwhile, new generations of Palestinians in the 1980s—born under occupation—"questioned their parents' submission to the daily humiliations they witnessed" while economic recession tightened belts, and, from 1985 onward, demonstrations increased.²³ In response, Israel reinstated the demolition of Palestinian homes of "suspected rioters," increased indefinite detention without trial up to six months, doubling the number of Palestinians under such detention, many of whom the IDF likely

¹⁹ Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: Tenth Edition*, (New York: Bedford/St. Martins, 2020), 398.

²⁰ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 398.

²¹ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 308.

²² Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 309.

²³ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 400.

beat confessions out of, according to an Israeli lawyer.²⁴ This escalation of tensions is “in retrospect, a turning point for many younger Palestinians in the territories,” for previously, “Arab terrorism [was] initiated from the outside...Starting in 1985, Arab violence in the territories was more likely to be inspired from within.”²⁵

During this period Palestinians in the West Bank began to feel the harsher realities of occupation which, “until 1977, Israeli occupation did not seem particularly onerous to most Arabs in the territories.”²⁶ However, Gaza, long under harsher siege than the West Bank, “had a long tradition of opposing Israeli rule” with a much stronger Islamic presence that stemmed from the Gaza branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, which advocated for “personal reform (*jihad*) as the dominant moral imperative.”²⁷ An offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood, Islamic Jihad advocated aggressive militant rhetoric, “that armed resistance against Israel was the only path to liberation.”²⁸ Ironically, Israel initially fostered the development of the Muslim Brotherhood, hoping its religious elements would splinter support away from the secular Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO).²⁹

The First Intifada began on December 8, 1987, as a “spontaneous eruption of hatred and frustration, directed mostly at Israel but to some extent the external Palestinian leadership,” after an Israeli military transport killed four Palestinians and injured others after crashing “into several Arab cars in Gaza.”³⁰ Rumors quickly spread that the crash was an intentional act of revenge—by a relative of an Israeli stabbed to death by a Gazan the day prior—and the funerals of the victims in Gaza launched simultaneous

²⁴ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 400.

²⁵ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 400-401.

²⁶ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 398.

²⁷ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 403.

²⁸ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 403.

²⁹ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 403.

³⁰ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 398.

uprisings in the West Bank.³¹ Initially undirected by a higher command, “the intifada was a rebellion of the poor and the young, the less advantaged sectors of the population.”³² The PLO somewhat successfully co-opted the organic uprisings.³³

The demonstrators decided against widespread armed struggle, in the spirit of other non-violent movements, “the image of the Palestinian populace with stones confronting armed Israeli troops who shot to kill was one that would affect world opinion.”³⁴ Israeli strategy proved predictable, as Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin (1922-1995) affirmed “shooting at demonstrators, was acceptable,” and, “the beating of prisoners to ‘teach them a lesson’ was encouraged.”³⁵ In the first five weeks thirty-three Palestinians were killed, and roughly 2,000 imprisoned while no Israelis were killed.³⁶ Violence continued to escalate as the uprising stretched over years; “By the end of 1989, an estimated 626 Palestinians and forty-three Israelis had been killed, 37,439 Arabs wounded, and between 35,000 and 40,000 arrested.”³⁷ Likely contributing to the lethal disparity, Israel also began to permit plain clothed snipers to assassinate stone throwers—with such an incident as recent as 2018 captured on film and referenced in the conclusion of this paper.³⁸ Rather than crushing the Palestinian uprising as Rabin hoped, “Israeli repression unified it” and even many women became political activists and demonstrators in the generally secular attitude of the early intifada.³⁹

The failure to convene a United Nations Security Conference—called for by the PLO in April, 1987—along with the perceived weakness of the exiled PLO leadership, hurt their

³¹ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 398.

³² Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 404.

³³ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 404.

³⁴ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 404.

³⁵ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 405.

³⁶ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 406.

³⁷ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 408.

³⁸ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 408-409.

³⁹ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 407-408.

prestige.⁴⁰ While the PLO advocated for a two-state solution, an independent Palestine that coexists with Israel, “as a result of their failed diplomacy, the appeal of Islamic groups increased. They alone appeared determined to achieve the goal of Palestinian independence, albeit to create a religious instead of secular state.”⁴¹ Islamic Jihad advocated for a one-state solution necessitating an armed struggle to overthrow the Israeli state and create an Islamic state, inspired by the Islamic Revolution of 1979 in Iran, as opposed to the PLO’s ostensible goals of a democratic secular state.⁴² Hamas, or the Islamic Resistance Movement, “was a direct outgrowth of the intifada” that also called for the restitution of all of former Palestine.⁴³

In Geneva on May 25, 1990, Yasser Arafat (1929-2004), the leader of the PLO, appealed to the United Nations (UN) in an attempt to legitimize diplomatic efforts as a worthwhile cause to the increasingly disaffected, occupied and displaced Palestinians.⁴⁴ Pleading for an investigation into an Israeli murder of a Gazan five days earlier—which prompted further demonstrations injuring another six to seven hundred—“a request that received backing from fourteen of the fifteen members; the United States alone opposed it because Israel would not accept it.”⁴⁵ As would become status quo, the United States used its superpower status and veto power as a permanent member of the UNSC to defend Israel, and act in defiance of the majority of the UN member states and the spirit of the international democratic institution.

Despite Arafat’s previous courtship of the United States in 1988, when he gained Washington D.C.’s recognition of “the democratic Palestinian state which [the PLO] seeks to establish in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip” from Secretary of State George Schultz (1920-1921), by renouncing terrorism and accepting

⁴⁰ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 409.

⁴¹ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 409.

⁴² Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 409.

⁴³ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 409.

⁴⁴ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 411.

⁴⁵ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 411.

UNSC Resolution 242 (a UN resolution calling for Arab aggressor states in the 1967 Six Days War to recognize Israel's right to exist).⁴⁶ The United States' commitment to Palestinian statehood quickly faltered before flatlining the 1990 UN investigation, where it accepted the Israeli Likud Prime Minister, Yitzhak Shamir's, underhanded plans for elections in the Palestinian territories as a substitute for the investigation. These planned elections bestowed upon Palestinians the mighty honor of unspecified "affairs of daily life," while Israel retained "control of security, foreign affairs, and all aspects of policy pertaining to the settlers in the territory."⁴⁷ The absurdity of these sham elections was not lost on the Palestinians, who rejected it, but not draconian enough for Israeli right-wingers like Sharon, who had to be assured by Shamir that, "We will not give the Arabs one inch of our land, even if we have to negotiate for ten years."⁴⁸ America accepted this, giving Israel one year to find Palestinian leaders for the West Bank and Gaza—of which none ultimately came, which "gave Israel another year to suppress the intifada and add more settlements."⁴⁹

After these failed attempts to win Western support—and with his own popularity amongst Palestinians faltering—Arafat forged unfortunate ties to Iraq for he believed, "only Baghdad could pose the credible military threat necessary to force Israeli concessions."⁵⁰ In roughly a year, the United States "destroyed much of Iraq's military and civilian infrastructure" after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990.⁵¹ A massive regiment of Arafat's supposed "credible [Iraqi] military threat" was neutralized by American bombs while retreating from Kuwait, in the now infamous Highway of Death where, "the retreating Iraqi soldiers (as well as milk vans, fire trucks, limousines, and a bulldozer) had been trapped. They were frozen in a traffic jam, blocked off by the

⁴⁶ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 409.

⁴⁷ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 410.

⁴⁸ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 410.

⁴⁹ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 410-411.

⁵⁰ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 412.

⁵¹ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 412.

Americans, near Mutla Ridge, by a minefield.”⁵² Arafat’s defense of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait continued his fall from grace and many other Arab heads of state cut off funding for the PLO, leading to losses of at least \$100 million annually.⁵³ The PLO’s decline also increased the legitimacy of more militant groups like Hamas, their popularity also a consequence of Israeli policy that promoted Islamic groups against the secular PLO in the 1980s.⁵⁴ Though many Arab leaders disagreed with Arafat, they also recognized the hypocrisy of the United States using its UNSC veto to protect Israeli mistreatment of Palestinians while using the UN to legitimize its own attacks on Iraq, but other states saw opportunity in a pacified Iraq.⁵⁵ Syria considered the intervention an attempt to appeal to the United States for a brokered peace agreement with Israel, in return President of Syria, Hafiz Assad (1930-2000), “received U.S. assurances that it considered Israel’s 1981 annexation of the Golan Heights to be illegal and that Security Council Resolution 242 applied to the Golan and the West Bank.”⁵⁶ Syrians, like the Palestinians, would come to find the United States, nor the United Nations, can be trusted to uphold their assurances or adjudicate international law even handedly.

By the late 1990s, Arafat and the PLO, in an attempt to regain legitimacy, began to hold a patchwork of secret meetings with Rabin referred to as The Oslo Processes, that laid the groundwork for the Camp David Summit in July of 2000 and ancillary peace talks.⁵⁷ In these meetings the desperate Arafat gave concessions that angered the Palestinian population, and Rabin’s diplomatic efforts to strengthen the PLO in opposition to Hamas angered right-wing Israelis—leading Yigal Amir (b.1970) to

⁵² Torie Rose DeGhett, “The War Photo No One Would Publish,” *The Atlantic*, August 8, 2014, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/08/the-war-photo-no-one-would-publish/375762/>.

⁵³ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 415.

⁵⁴ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 419.

⁵⁵ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 415.

⁵⁶ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 415.

⁵⁷ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 475.

assassinate Rabin on November 4, 1995.⁵⁸ By 2001 the Clinton Administration (1993-2001) that pushed for the Camp David Summit and ancillary negotiations was replaced by George W. Bush (b.1946), a hawkish neoconservative who “greatly admired [the new Israeli right-wing Prime Minister] Sharon,” and negotiations broke down while violence erupted.⁵⁹

Second Intifada 2000-2005

The Second Intifada was ultimately a much more violent and bloody conflict than the first. The Palestinian population was disillusioned in the lack of progress from negotiations, rebelling against both Arafat and the occupation, and the Israeli government was pushed further to the right, emboldened by renewed support from the United States.⁶⁰ Shireen Abu Akleh rose to prominence covering these violent, tumultuous, and complicated webs of events, necessarily abbreviated here. Jenin, the city Shireen Abu Akleh was ultimately killed in, was a major flashpoint of tension throughout the uprisings.

While a potential peace process was still clinging to life in late 2000, current Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak (b.1942), “had virtually no control over the military. Led by Likud sympathizers, the army’s massive retaliation helped to undermine any chances of reconciliation.”⁶¹ The uprising began similarly to the first Intifada, Palestinian stone throwers and tire burners were quickly met with Israeli gunfire: between September 28, 2000 to the year’s end 325 Palestinians were killed and roughly 10,600 injured, to thirty-six Israeli deaths and 362 injured.⁶² According to official Israeli military records, it was estimated Palestinians used firearms in “27.6 percent of these demonstrations, whereas Israeli troops invariably used live ammunition and often altered crowd-

⁵⁸ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 444.

⁵⁹ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 473.

⁶⁰ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 485.

⁶¹ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 486.

⁶² Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 484.

control rubber bullets to make them more lethal.”⁶³ This mirrors Israel’s contemporary use of internationally banned “exploding bullets,” detailed later.⁶⁴

By Sharon’s election in 2001, Palestinian suicide bombings against Israeli settlements became a common form of retaliation to the Israeli soldiers that increasingly harassed, beat, and killed Palestinians for “ambiguous reasons,” most of which were never investigated by the IDF.⁶⁵ The increase in secular, and even female suicide bombers undermined the religious fundamentalist sect of the oppositions message, but also demonstrated the widescale discontent amongst a wide swarth of Palestinian society.⁶⁶ In 2002, Sharon erected a wall up to twenty feet high to divide the West Bank that ostensibly followed the 1967 border, but effectively seized more Palestinian land incorporating illegal Israeli settlements—which the International Court of Justice has ruled violated international law.⁶⁷ Along with an eventual truce called by Hamas in 2005, the cyclical escalation of violence slowed down.⁶⁸ From 2000 to early 2006 over 3,300 Palestinians were killed by Israeli forces (while those killed by settlers is unknown) and 1,030 Israelis were killed by Palestinians or Arab Israelis.⁶⁹

Hamas’ calls for a ceasefire proved strategically useful, for they won a 2005 democratic election of the Palestinian parliamentary—an election the United States and Israeli government-backed but had supported the secular PLO aligned Fatah.⁷⁰ The United States responded by rejecting the election and

⁶³ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 485.

⁶⁴ Harry Evans, “Israeli Soldiers Are Allegedly Killing Palestinians with Horrible Illegal Bullets,” *Vice*, March 15, 2013, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/nmadw/israeli-soldiers-are-allegedly-committing-war-crimes-in-palestine>.

⁶⁵ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 487.

⁶⁶ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 487.

⁶⁷ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 488.

⁶⁸ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 488.

⁶⁹ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 489.

⁷⁰ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 499.

blocked aid to Palestinians.⁷¹ This set the stage for ongoing spats of violence between Palestinians and Israel, especially in Gaza—whose residents were already malnourished and impoverished, now under ever harsher economic sanctions that continue to this day. Israeli policy continues to confiscate Palestinian land throughout the West Bank and East Jerusalem, despite further UNSC Resolutions such as the 2016 Resolution 2334, “Condemning all measures aimed at altering the demographic composition...of the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967...including the construction and expansion of settlements, transfer of Israeli settlers, confiscation of land, demolition of homes, and displacement of Palestinian civilians” as a violation of international humanitarian law.⁷² One such displacement campaign in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood, that the UN reaffirmed as a “violation of international law,” escalated into a violent confrontation between Gazan militants and Israeli police forces in May 2021.⁷³

History of Danger for Journalists and Activists in Israel

Covering the Israeli occupation of Palestine has historically been a dangerous endeavor for journalists and activists. When interviewed by *Time Magazine*, Lina Abu Akleh noted that Shireen’s death is not an isolated incident and referred to a 2018 report by the U.N. Independent Commission of Inquiry that stated, “Israeli forces target civilians, paramedics, and journalists.”⁷⁴ American activist Rachel Corrie (1979-2003) was killed on March 16, 2003,

⁷¹ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 499.

⁷² Toi Staff, “Full text of UNSC Resolution 2334, demanding Israel stop all settlement activity,” *The Times of Israel*, December 23, 2016, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/full-text-of-uns-resolution-approved-dec-23-demanding-israel-stop-all-settlement-activity/>.

⁷³ Robert Mackey, “This Is Not Fine: Why Video of an Ultranationalist Frenzy in Jerusalem is so Unsettling,” *The Intercept*, May 11, 2021, <https://theintercept.com/2021/05/11/not-fine-video-ultranationalist-frenzy-jerusalem-unsettling/>.

⁷⁴ Mansoor, “Niece of Slain Al Jazeera Journalist.”

defending a Palestinian family's home she had been staying with from demolition to clear the way for further Israeli settlement.⁷⁵ Corrie sat defiantly in front of the house, likely assuming her white skin and American citizenship would protect her from the Israeli savagery regularly dispensed to Palestinians. Wearing a bright orange vest and climbing on top of a dirt mound to make herself clearly visible, she was deliberately crushed by an Israeli bulldozer that then backed up, "effectively crushing her twice,"—recorded in broad daylight.⁷⁶ In 2022, Rachel Corrie's parents, Cindy and Craig, shared the Hope and Resilience: Benefit for Palestinian Rights & Direct Aid's Parrhesia Award with Abu Akleh's family.⁷⁷

In a little under a month after Corrie's killing, British photojournalist and activist Tom Hurndall (1981-2004) was fatally shot in the head by an Israeli sniper on April 11, 2003, and succumbed to the trauma the following year.⁷⁸ His crime, "according to a first-hand account by the local coordinator of the International Solidarity Movement," was an attempt to save a young boy and girl from the sniper firing at them.⁷⁹ In 2010, Israeli soldiers descended from a helicopter onto the Turkish ship, the *Mavi Marmara*, destined for Gaza to provide aid to the besieged and impoverished, and promptly killed nine peace activists, including one Turkish American, Furkan Dogan.⁸⁰

⁷⁵ Alice Speri, "Israeli Forces Keep Killing Americans While U.S. Officials Give Them a Pass," *The Intercept*, July 23, 2022, <https://theintercept.com/2022/07/13/israel-rachel-corrie-shireen-abu-akleh-killings/>.

⁷⁶ Speri, "Israeli Forces Keep Killing Americans While U.S. Officials Give Them a Pass."

⁷⁷ "About the Corries," Rebuilding Alliance, accessed May 15, 2023, <https://www.rebuildingalliance.org/about-cindy-and-craig-corrie>.

⁷⁸ Sean O'Hagan, "Tom Hurndall: a remarkable man's photographs of the Middle East," *The Guardian*, March 1, 2012, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2012/mar/01/tom-hurndall-middle-east-photographs>.

⁷⁹ O'Hagan, "Tom Hurndall: a remarkable man's photographs of the Middle East."

⁸⁰ Speri, "Israeli Forces Keep Killing Americans While U.S. Officials Give Them a Pass."

Beyond individual acts of murder, Israel has been accused of purposely targeting journalistic institutions as a whole. In May of 2021, Israel bombed the offices of the *Associated Press* and *Al Jazeera* in Gaza.⁸¹ One year later, Pierre Haski, President of Reporters Without Borders, on the international response to hold Israel accountable for the bombing of the building, said:

There has been no progress, to be honest, that can be spoken of because Israel says it's the mist of the war. It doesn't take into account that targeting a media building is considered a war crime and is contradicting every international law resolution that exists, particularly resolution 2222 of the UN Security Council from 2015, which states clearly that journalists should be treated as civilians and therefore cannot be a target in a war.⁸²

In this supposed war of 2021, fourteen Israeli civilians and one soldier were killed, while 256 Palestinians were killed and roughly 2,000 were wounded by “hundreds of Israeli air strikes” that also hit “commercial buildings, residential towers and private houses across the Gaza strip, where two million people live.”⁸³ Only one year later, the IDF killed Shireen, arguably the figurehead of *Al Jazeera* in Palestine, “known by many as the daughter of Palestine.”⁸⁴ According to *Al Jazeera*:

The Committee to Protect Journalists says, twenty-four [journalists], not including Shireen Abu Akleh, have been killed in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory, since 2002. Other press

⁸¹ Jamjoom, “Who was Al Jazeera’s slain journalist Shireen Abu Akleh?,” 4:20.

⁸² Jamjoom, “Who was Al Jazeera’s slain journalist Shireen Abu Akleh?,” 9:20.

⁸³ “US Secretary of State announces aid to Gaza,” RTE, last modified May 25, 2021,

<https://www.rte.ie/news/world/2021/0525/1223894-blinken-gaza/>.

⁸⁴ Jamjoom, “Who was Al Jazeera’s slain journalist Shireen Abu Akleh?,” 0:15.

freedom advocates have reported even higher numbers while Israel systematically targets journalists, including *Al Jazeera*, has been the finding of several human rights groups.⁸⁵

Death and Funeral

Shireen and her colleagues got wind of an IOF raid taking place in the refugee camps of Jenin in the early morning of May 11, 2022, part of the larger Israeli campaign of night-time raids to clear Palestinian encampments and buildings for demolition, called Operation Breakwater.⁸⁶ Shireen was quick to jump on the story, despite other suggestions that the lead may not be worth her time; Hatuqa says this zeal was emblematic of Abu Akleh, modest with no “story too small for her.”⁸⁷ Video footage from fellow *AJ* journalists and civilians shows that when the journalists arrived, the scene was calm, and they walked slowly down the street from an IOF patrol inside multiple heavy transport vehicles. This was a common practice of the journalists, intended to make themselves known to the soldiers as non-threatening; Hatuqa says of Shireen, she was “always careful, never putting herself, or her team, in harm’s way. She always wore her helmet and blue flak jacket emblazoned with the word “PRESS.”⁸⁸ She did everything she was supposed to do as a journalist to mitigate risks while doing her job— but she still didn’t make it out of the Jenin refugee camp alive that day. A bullet, according to eyewitnesses, struck her in the neck, in those few inches that wouldn’t have been covered by

⁸⁵ Jamjoom, “Who was Al Jazeera’s slain journalist Shireen Abu Akleh?,” 3:45.

⁸⁶ Kaamil Ahmed et al, “The Killing of Shireen Abu Akleh: what one morning in the West Bank reveals about the occupation,” *The Guardian*, March 21, 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/ng-interactive/2023/mar/21/the-killing-of-shireen-abu-akleh-what-one-morning-in-the-west-bank-reveals-about-the-occupation>.

⁸⁷ Hatuqa, interview by What Next, *The Killing of Shireen Abu Akleh*.

⁸⁸ Hatuqa, “Opinion: My Friend Shireen Abu Akleh told the stories no one else wanted to tell.”

her protective gear.⁸⁹ Shireen said herself, “I don’t throw myself at death...I search for a safe place to stand and how to protect my crew before worrying about the footage.”⁹⁰ On Jenin, the city she unfortunately, lost her life in, Abu Akleh wrote that it was not just “one ephemeral story in my career or even in my personal life...It is the city that can raise my morale and help me fly. It embodies the Palestinian spirit that sometimes trembles and falls but, beyond all expectations, rises to pursue its flights and dreams.”⁹¹

Video footage shows the moments directly before the shooting remained calm and that the journalists were not provocative or with any individuals hostile to the IOF patrol. It was not until Shireen and three others, in their protective gear clearly marked as journalists, came into view of the IOF convoy that the shooting broke out. *Al Jazeera* and a 3D geomodelling company using aerial drone footage to reconstruct the events demonstrated that from the vantage point of the Israeli convoy, the shooter was determined that whenever someone appeared in his field of vision, he targeted them immediately.”⁹²

After the first round of shooting, the video showed Shireen laying on the ground while her colleagues hid behind cover and fellow journalist and *AJ* correspondent, Ali al-Samoudi, was shot and hit in the shoulder moments before Akleh, her last words, “Ali has been wounded!”⁹³ Shooting continued intermittently as any attempts to reach Abu Akleh were met with more targeted fire, which the 3D modeling showed to be a direct response to any visible movement.⁹⁴ After a bystander named Sharif was able to pull another reporter and Shireen away from the line of fire, others

⁸⁹ Hatuqa, “Opinion: My Friend Shireen Abu Akleh.

⁹⁰ “Al-Jazeera’s Shireen Abu Akleh: pioneering Palestinian reporter.”

⁹¹ “Al-Jazeera’s Shireen Abu Akleh: pioneering Palestinian reporter.”

⁹² Faultlines, “The Killing of Shireen Abu Akleh,” *Al Jazeera English*, December 1, 2022, video, 21:23,

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SXy9SUDqUHK&ab_channel=AlJazeeraEnglish.

⁹³ Faultlines, “The Killing of Shireen Abu Akleh,” 7:19.

⁹⁴ Faultlines, “The Killing of Shireen Abu Akleh,” 21:27.

grabbed her and dragged her limp body into a car.⁹⁵ Sharif described watching her eyes fluttering as they carried her in what was perhaps her final heartbeats.⁹⁶ As they arrived at the hospital, the video shows her colleagues crying out her name in pain while others pleaded desperately with her body to wake up.⁹⁷

Two days after her death, Shireen Abu Akleh's Christian funeral procession through East Jerusalem brought together thousands in the Occupied West Bank.⁹⁸ Masses of mourners were united by the loss of an iconic media figure, perhaps *the* most prominent and consistent representation of the Palestinian plight. As was the case in life, Shireen's ability to unite Palestinians, as well as draw attention to the realities of Israeli occupation, was true of her death. A simple funeral procession required a massive show of force by the Israeli police, "beating and kicking pallbearers carrying the coffin that contained the body of the journalist, Shireen Abu Akleh, striking other mourners with batons, and forcing one man to the ground. During the commotion, the pallbearers were pushed backward, causing them to briefly lose control of one end of the coffin."⁹⁹ It would seem that even granting respect in death represented a potential threat to the Israeli state, akin to a *post hoc* reification of Abu Akleh's condemnatory reporting. Israeli police justified their actions as a response to mourners chanting "nationalist incitement" and throwing bottles at them.¹⁰⁰ Secretary of State Anthony Blinken (b.1962), supposedly "deeply troubled," described the Israeli police's actions as simply "intruding" and failed to firmly condemn the actions.¹⁰¹ Shireen's niece, Lina Abu Akleh, says of the funeral, "Shireen wasn't killed

⁹⁵ Faultlines, "The Killing of Shireen Abu Akleh," 9:25.

⁹⁶ Faultlines, "The Killing of Shireen Abu Akleh," 9:30.

⁹⁷ Faultlines, "The Killing of Shireen Abu Akleh," 9:45.

⁹⁸ Kingsley, "Killing of Palestinian Journalist: Israeli Police Attack Mourners."

⁹⁹ Kingsley, "Killing of Palestinian Journalist: Israeli Police Attack Mourners."

¹⁰⁰ Kingsley, "Killing of Palestinian Journalist: Israeli Police Attack Mourners."

¹⁰¹ Ali Harb, "Timeline: How U.S. stance shifted on killing of Shireen Abu Akleh," *Al Jazeera*, May 11, 2023,

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/5/11/timeline-how-us-stance-shifted-on-killing-of-shireen-abu-akleh>.

once. She was killed twice. Once in Jenin and once in Jerusalem when her funeral was attacked by the Israeli riot police. The way they attacked us was barbaric.”¹⁰²

The assault of her pallbearers outside of a hospital en route to a Christian church exposes contradictions often found rattling around the tin-can-remains of brains riddled with a cognitive and psychic degeneration typical of subscribers to the clash of civilizations myth that so many Westerners, and their leaders, wish to propagate. As United States Representative Rashida Talib (b.1976) noted, calling on the State Department to condemn Israeli brutality, “does being Palestinian make you less American?”¹⁰³ Marginalizing Arab and Palestinian Christian communities, like the one Shireen was a part of, allows Western Christian Evangelicals to evoke little, if any, sympathy for the people ancestrally linked to their prophet; and continue their march towards an apocalyptic prophecy of Jesus’ second coming that neoconservative policymakers have exploited.¹⁰⁴ The history of Christian antisemitism is conveniently dismissed with unrepentant support of a Zionist state that even Israeli rights groups like B’Tselem consider an apartheid “regime of Jewish supremacy from the Jordan River to the Sea.”¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Mansoor, “Niece of Slain Al Jazeera Journalist.”

¹⁰³ Kingsley, “Killing of Palestinian Journalist: Israeli Police Attack Mourners.”

¹⁰⁴ Philip Bump, “Half of evangelicals support Israel because they believe it is important for fulfilling end-times prophecy,” *The Washington Post*, May 14, 2018,

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/politics/wp/2018/05/14/half-of-evangelicals-support-israel-because-they-believe-it-is-important-for-fulfilling-end-times-prophecy/>.

¹⁰⁵ B’Tselem, “A regime of Jewish supremacy from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea: This is apartheid,” *B’Tselem* The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, January 12, 2021,

https://www.btselem.org/publications/fulltext/202101_this_is_apartheid; At least one UN investigator has also called Israel an apartheid state, Patrick Kingsley, “U.N. Investigator Accuses Israel of Apartheid, Citing Permanence of Occupation,” *The New York Times*, March 23, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/23/world/middleeast/israel-apatheid-un.html>.

Investigation

Al Jazeera and eyewitnesses quickly blamed the IDF, claiming that Shireen and the other journalists were targeted by Israel and that her death was an apparent assassination. A fellow *Al Jazeera* reporter present during the shooting, Mujahid Al Saadi, claimed that Shireen was shot in a part of her head under the ear not covered by her helmet, suggesting that with such precision, it was a deliberate shot by a sniper.¹⁰⁶ Independent investigative group, Bellingcat later claimed that Israeli fire was likely responsible and the shooting was “slow and deliberate, suggesting targeting rather than a spray of bullets aimed at another object or person.”¹⁰⁷ *Al Jazeera* filed a claim against Israel at the International Criminal Court (ICC); however, Israel—like the United States—is not a signatory to the ICC, leaving the motion largely symbolic.¹⁰⁸

Less than three hours after Shireen was killed, The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs posted a video on Twitter that supposedly showed the Palestinian gunmen responsible for the killing, which was then retweeted by then-Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennet (b.1972), amongst other ranking Israeli officials.¹⁰⁹ However, Israeli human rights group B’Tselem quickly documented the location of the video and reaffirmed it is impossible that the shots fired in the video reached Shireen’s location, as the two were separated by multiple buildings and

¹⁰⁶ Mujahid Al Saadi, “Shireen Abu Akleh killing: Journalist recounts moment *Al Jazeera* journalist was shot dead,” *Middle East Eye*, May 11, 2022, video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GP-5K4DLtKk&ab_channel=MiddleEastEye.

¹⁰⁷ Bellingcat, “Unravelling the Killing of Shireen Abu Akleh,” *Bellingcat*, May 14, 2022, <https://www.bellingcat.com/news/mena/2022/05/14/unravelling-the-killing-of-shireen-abu-akleh>.

¹⁰⁸ *Al Jazeera* Staff, “Why is *Al Jazeera* taking killed journalist case to the ICC?,” *Al Jazeera*, May 7, 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/5/27/explainer-al-jazeeras-abu-akleh-case-at-the-icc>.

¹⁰⁹ Ahmed, “The Killing of Shireen Abu Akleh: what one morning in the West Bank reveals about the occupation.”

walls.¹¹⁰ The Israeli military spokesman, former air defense commander Ran Kochav, claimed on the day of the shooting that Abu Akleh had been “filming and working for a media outlet amidst armed Palestinians.”¹¹¹ According to Bellingcat, “there is no available footage or imagery that suggests any Palestinian combatants were stationed between the IDF soldiers and Abu Akleh at any stage.”¹¹² The day Shireen Abu Akleh was killed, then-State Department spokesman, Ned Price (b.1982), suggested her killer should be, “prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law,” and that, “Israelis have the wherewithal and capabilities to conduct a thorough investigation.”¹¹³

By May 26th, fifteen days after her death, CNN published a finding of “an investigation by CNN [that] offers new evidence - including two videos of the scene of the shooting—that there was no active combat, nor any Palestinian militants, near Abu Akleh in the moments leading up to her death.”¹¹⁴ Videos obtained by CNN, corroborated by testimony from eight eyewitnesses, an audio forensic analyst and an explosive weapons expert, suggest that Abu Akleh was shot dead in a targeted attack by Israeli forces.”¹¹⁵ In the next month, the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* concluded that the IDF likely shot her and that there were no Palestinian militants in the area or exchanges of gunfire prior to

¹¹⁰ Hossam Sarhan, Frank Andrews, “Shireen Abu Akleh killing: Footage and geolocation disprove Israeli claims,” *Middle East Eye*, published May 11, 2022, last updated May 14, 2022, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/shireen-abu-akleh-killing-al-jazeera-journalist-footage-geolocation-disprove-israel-claims>.

¹¹¹ Zeena Saifi et al, “‘They were shooting directly at journalists’: New evidence suggests Shireen Abu Akleh was killed in targeted attack by Israeli forces,” CNN World, *CNN*, last updated May 26, 2022, <https://www.cnn.com/2022/05/24/middleeast/shireen-abu-akleh-jenin-killing-investigation-cmd-intl/index.html>.

¹¹² Bellingcat, “Unravelling the Killing of Shireen Abu Akleh.”

¹¹³ Harb, “Timeline: How US stance shifted on killing of Shireen Abu Akleh.”

¹¹⁴ Saifi, “‘They were shooting directly at journalists’: New evidence suggests Shireen Abu Akleh was killed in targeted attack by Israeli forces,”

¹¹⁵ Saifi, “‘They were shooting directly at journalists’.”

her killing.¹¹⁶ On June 7th, when confronted by journalist Abby Martin, Blinken called for an “independent, credible” investigation, but only two days later, a State Department email backtracked on the independent angle, only mentioning a “credible” investigation.¹¹⁷ June 24th, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights concluded that Abu Akleh was killed by the IDF, claiming, “It is deeply disturbing that Israeli authorities have not conducted a criminal investigation.”¹¹⁸

As evidence piled up against Israel’s initial claims, they changed their stance and later accepted the possibility that an IDF soldier could have accidentally hit Shireen but maintained plausible deniability, insisted that there was an “exchange of gunfire,” and refused to pursue criminal charges of any kind against any of the soldiers involved.¹¹⁹ The IDF eventually opened an investigation, but *Al Jazeera* maintains that the delay of over 100 days “is intended to evade the criminal responsibility it bears for the killings of Shireen Abu Akleh.”¹²⁰ On September 5, 2022, the IDF announced that “it is not possible to unequivocally determine the source of the gunfire which hit and killed Ms. Abu Akleh. However, there is a high possibility that Ms. Abu Akleh was accidentally hit by IDF gunfire fired toward suspects identified as armed Palestinian gunmen.”¹²¹ The conclusion leaves open the possibility that Abu Akleh was hit “by bullets fired by

¹¹⁶ Shira Rubin, Kareem Fahim, “U.N. rights body says Israeli soldiers killed American journalist in West Bank,” *The Washington Post*, June 24, 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/06/24/israel-un-shireen-american-journalist/>.

¹¹⁷ Harb, “Timeline: How US stance shifted on killing of Shireen Abu Akleh.”

¹¹⁸ Rubin, “U.N. rights body says Israeli soldiers killed American journalist in West Bank.”

¹¹⁹ Rubin, “U.N. rights body says Israeli soldiers killed American journalist in West Bank.”

¹²⁰ Rubin, “U.N. rights body says Israeli soldiers killed American journalist in West Bank.”

¹²¹ Rubin, “U.N. rights body says Israeli soldiers killed American journalist in West Bank.”

armed Palestinian gunmen toward the direction of the area in which she was present.”¹²²

The vague language potentially blaming Palestinians for the shooting, wherein all other investigations point to the contrary, is a gross manipulation of language and fact that will allow Israel to point to the finding as inconclusive to coldly brush off this killing when (if) any future condemnation is allowed to be levied against Israel. That is if the United States doesn’t block international inquiries, or Israeli politicians and lobbying groups don’t cry antisemitism at criticism of a sovereign nation-state, as they habitually do. *Britannica* refers to “semitic” as a language grouping that “came to include Arabs” among others—holding nearly two million Semitic people under draconian siege in the Gaza Strip, often referred to as the world’s largest open-air prison, is interestingly not considered such an instance of antisemitism by Zionist forces, though it resembles the worst forms of it Europe ever produced in forms of racialized ghettos.¹²³

The same day it was issued, September 5, 2022, the United States “welcome[d] Israel’s review of this tragic event,” and the next day dropped Price’s initial demand for prosecution.¹²⁴ Shireen Abu Akleh’s family rejected the IDF investigation’s findings, and claimed Israel:

Refused to take responsibility for murdering Shireen, and called for an independent investigation. They claim the report “tried to obscure the truth and avoid responsibility for killing Shireen Abu Akleh, our aunt, sister, best friend, journalist, and a Palestinian American... We’ve known for over four months now that an Israeli soldier shot and killed Shireen as countless

¹²² Rubin, “U.N. rights body says Israeli soldiers killed American journalist in West Bank.”

¹²³ The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, “Semite,” *Britannica*, accessed May 15, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Semite>.

¹²⁴ Harb, “Timeline: How US stance shifted on killing of Shireen Abu Akleh.”

investigations conducted by CNN, the Associated Press, the New York Times, *Al Jazeera*, Al-Haq, B'tselem, the United Nations, and others have all concluded. And yet, as expected, Israel has refused to take responsibility for murdering Shireen. Our family is not surprised by this outcome since it's obvious to anyone that Israeli war criminals cannot investigate their own crimes. However, we remain deeply hurt, frustrated, and disappointed.¹²⁵

While the family called for an investigation by the United States (which they call “the bare minimum the U.S. government should do for one of their own citizens”), the State Department spokesperson, Ned Price, welcomed the dubious IDF review—childish or malevolent enough to believe the offending party can hold itself to account.¹²⁶ While Price talks out of both sides of his reptilian mouth, accepting the IDF finding but claiming that “not only was Shireen an American citizen, she was a fearless reporter whose journalism and pursuit of truth earned her the respect of audiences around the world,” the family remains committed to justice, “we will continue to demand that the U.S. government follow through with its stated commitments to accountability.”¹²⁷ But Price only offers the family “thoughts” while the United States government offers Israel a near-endless supply of weaponry and aid.¹²⁸

On the anniversary of Shireen Abu Akleh’s death, May 11, 2023, Daniel Hagari, an Israeli army spokesman, told CNN, “I think it’s an opportunity for me to say here we are very sorry of the death of the late Shireen Abu Akleh.”¹²⁹ Note the passive

¹²⁵ Saifi, “‘They were shooting directly at journalists’.”

¹²⁶ Saifi, “‘They were shooting directly at journalists’.”

¹²⁷ Saifi, “‘They were shooting directly at journalists’.”

¹²⁸ Saifi, “‘They were shooting directly at journalists’.”

¹²⁹ Ali Harb, “‘Upsetting’: Shireen Abu Akleh family rejects Israel’s ‘sorry’,” *Al Jazeera*, May 18, 2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/5/18/upsetting-shireen-abu-akleh-family-rejects-israels-sorry>.

language, apologizing for the death without any mention of how she died and no acknowledgment of the previous lies spread by ranking Israeli officials. Lina Abu Akleh, from outside the United States Capitol in Washington D.C., rejected this, “To be very clear: The Israeli army did not admit or apologize for murdering Shireen. To us, we don’t consider that an apology...It’s honestly a slap in the face to Shireen’s legacy and to our family. An apology—which that was not—is not accountability.”¹³⁰

International Hypocrisy

Pierre Haski, President of Reporters Without Borders, said on May 15, 2022, to *Al Jazeera* that “without an international presence there will be no accountability, we have to be very clear about that...for the past twenty years for the thirty-five journalists who have been killed...there has been no accountability, never, not for a single case.”¹³¹ Haski also notes interesting disparities in the coverage of the Russian-Ukrainian war that began in February of 2022.¹³² The differences in response to Shireen Abu Akleh’s death and Brent Renaud (1971-2022), another American journalist killed in Ukraine, demonstrate the overt biases against Palestine and in favor of Israel.¹³³ Headlines from *The Guardian* directly mention that Brent Renaud was a “U.S. film-maker” who was “reportedly killed by Russian forces,” while Shireen Abu Akleh was a “journalist in the West Bank” that *Al Jazeera* “accuses Israeli forces of killing;” authoritatively condemning Russia for killing an American but does not even mention Shireen was a United States

¹³⁰ Harb, “‘Upsetting’: Shireen Abu Akleh family rejects Israel’s ‘sorry.’”

¹³¹ Jamjoom, “Who was Al Jazeera’s slain journalist Shireen Abu Akleh?” 4:40-8:00.

¹³² Jamjoom, “Who was Al Jazeera’s slain journalist Shireen Abu Akleh?” 8:00.

¹³³ Al Bawaba, “Shireen Abu Akleh and Brent Renaud: Same Death, Different Headlines,” *albawaba*, The Node, May 17, 2022, <https://www.albawaba.com/node/shireen-abu-akleh-and-brent-renaud-same-death-different-headlines-1477144>.

Citizen.¹³⁴ *The New York Times* ran headlines that read “American journalist, is killed” for Renaud, and for Shireen, “Palestinian Journalist, Dies, Aged 51,” again rejecting to mention she is American while suggesting the bullet that cut down Abu Akleh was a natural occurrence, akin to an American keeling over from heart failure after a life of Big Macs, oxycontin, and supersized Coca Cola.¹³⁵ As Jamil Dakwar, a Palestinian American human rights lawyer that advised the Corrie family, stated, “Had it been any other foreign government, there would already be a Shireen Abu Akleh and Rachel Corrie Accountability Act.”¹³⁶

These headlines demonstrate media bias in favor of American allies and against those branded enemy states, in this case, Russia. The continued deference of American leaders and media to Israel is evidence of blatant hypocrisy regarding the supposedly sacrosanct nature of human rights—which is unfortunately only a concern when committed by United States branded enemy states. Russia’s criminality of homosexuality is often maligned, while the United States has long allied itself with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, where homosexuality is punishable by death. Israel is free to annex Palestinian and Syrian territory, but Russia’s claims on Crimea represent a supposedly unprecedented attack on the UN charter?

The ICC moved relatively quickly to issue an arrest warrant for Vladimir Putin (b.1952) over accusations of “unlawful deportation of people, in particular children” in the war in Ukraine, while similar accusations could be levied against Israel’s displacement of Palestinians against multiple UNSC Resolutions it is not similarly condemned.¹³⁷ The American elite responsible for

¹³⁴ Al Bawaba, “Shireen Abu Akleh and Brent Renaud: Same Death, Different Headlines.”

¹³⁵ Al Bawaba, “Shireen Abu Akleh and Brent Renaud: Same Death, Different Headlines.”

¹³⁶ Speri, “Israeli Forces Keep Killing Americans While U.S. Officials Give Them a Pass.”

¹³⁷ Al Jazeera, “All you need to know about the ICC’s arrest warrant for Putin,” *Al Jazeera*, March 17, 2023,

worse conflicts, in terms of deaths and length, are also free of consequence. Republican President George H.W. Bush's (1924-2018) relentless bombing campaign of Iraq in 1991 wrought "a rather highly urbanized and mechanized society [to] a pre-industrial age nation," according to a UN survey.¹³⁸ Or consider his demon spawn, George W. Bush's (b.1946) 2003 war in Iraq which, according to "Senior U.S Defense Intelligence Agency officers," killed more civilians in *its first day* than the Ukrainian war killed in one month.¹³⁹ Americans remain self-righteous, "more likely to accept official justifications, when they hear that civilians were killed by U.S. forces or American weapons," due to controlled media that shows "corpses in Ukraine and the wails of their loved ones, but shields us from equally disturbing images of people killed by U.S. or allied forces."¹⁴⁰

Ex-Central Intelligence Agency and imperial cleanup man, Ned Price, who so *graciously* offered thoughts to the Abu Akleh family one year earlier, stuck the knife of lawfare into the back of those he'd later claim sympathy for. In response to the ICC declaring jurisdiction to investigate claims in the Palestinian West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza, Price was clear, "we do not believe the Palestinians qualify as a sovereign state, and therefore are not qualified to obtain membership as a state, or participate as a state in international entities, or conferences, including the ICC."¹⁴¹ Months after offering his thoughts, on December 6th,

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/3/17/all-you-need-to-know-about-the-iccs-arrest-warrant-for-putin>.

¹³⁸ Medea Benjamin, Nicolas J.S. Davies, "Will Russia's war crimes in Ukraine convince the U.S. to consider its recent past?," Salon Commentary, *Salon*, April 15, 2022 <https://www.salon.com/2022/04/15/will-in-ukraine-convince-the-us-to-consider-its-recent-past/>.

¹³⁹ Benjamin, "Will Russia's war crimes in Ukraine convince the U.S. to consider its recent past?"

¹⁴⁰ Benjamin, "Will Russia's war crimes in Ukraine convince the U.S. to consider its recent past?"

¹⁴¹ Henry Austin, Adela Suliman, "U.S. has 'serious concerns' about International Criminal Court decision on Israeli war crimes probe," *NBC News*, last updated February 6, 2021,

Price affirmed the United States' opposition to *Al Jazeera's* push for the ICC to investigate Akleh's death, "We oppose it in this case... We maintain our longstanding objections to the ICC's investigation into the Palestinian situation."¹⁴² It is interesting, as previously mentioned, neither the United States nor Israel are members of the ICC, yet rather than demonstrating some lower status apparent in the case of Palestinians, who are excluded because they are not a sovereign state, it appears the United States and Israeli exclusion from the ICC marks a level of supranational dominance and control.

Price's words continue to illuminate the situation, "We have serious concerns about the ICC's attempts to exercise its jurisdiction over Israeli personnel. The United States has always taken the position that the court's jurisdiction should be reserved for countries that consent to it, or are referred to by the UN Security Council."¹⁴³ This makes the earlier suggestion hardly subtext. The idea the ICC should only be reserved to prosecute those who sign up to it (excluding the United States and Israel) or those condemned by the UNSC (which the United States has unlimited veto power over and unrepentantly uses to defend Israel) but can be dictated to by the non-member United States, is a clear indication that these international bodies are not even-handed adjudicators. To make this perfectly clear, the "Hague Invasion Act," formally known as the American Servicemembers Protection Act of 2002, "authorizes the use of military force to liberate any American or *citizen of a U.S.-allied country* [emphasis added] being held by the court... In addition, the law... restricts U.S.

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/international-criminal-court-paves-way-israel-war-crimes-investigation-n1256900>.

¹⁴² Harb, "Timeline: How U.S. stance shifted on killing of Shireen Abu Akleh."

¹⁴³ Ned Price, "Opposing International Criminal Court Attempts to Affirm Territorial Jurisdiction Over the Palestinian Situation," state.gov, U.S. Department of State, February 5, 2021,

<https://www.state.gov/opposing-international-criminal-court-attempts-to-affirm-territorial-jurisdiction-over-the-palestinian-situation/>.

participation in United Nations peacekeeping unless the United States obtains immunity from prosecution.”¹⁴⁴

Well aware the consequences for inhumanity are beyond them, whispers from the NATO allies ponder the potential for depleted uranium rounds to soon be shipped to Ukraine to assist against the Russians—dubious if not criminal when considering the lasting effects of these radioactive rounds on future children (generations of horribly disfigured and defected infants—Google search ‘Fallujah birth defects’).¹⁴⁵ Forgetting pathos, “The United Nations classifies Depleted Uranium munitions as illegal Weapons of Mass Destruction because of their long-term impact on the land over which they are used and the long-term health problems they cause.”¹⁴⁶ As described by a statement from Iraq Veterans Against War:

Depleted Uranium (DU) is a toxic, radioactive heavy metal that is the waste byproduct of the uranium enrichment process when producing nuclear weapons and uranium for nuclear reactors. Because this radioactive waste is plentiful and 1.7 times more dense than lead, the United States government uses DU in munitions/ammunition, which are extremely effective at piercing armored vehicles. However, every round of DU ammunition

¹⁴⁴ Human Rights Watch, “U.S.: ‘Hague Invasion Act’ Becomes Law,” hrw.org, Human Rights Watch, August 3, 2002, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2002/08/03/us-hague-invasion-act-becomes-law>.

¹⁴⁵ The Associated Press, “What are depleted uranium munitions? U.K. plans to provide them to Ukraine and Russia isn’t happy,” *CBC News*, March 23, 2023, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/ukraine-depleted-uranium-weapons-1.6788364#:~:text=The%20British%20Defence%20Ministry%20on%20Monday%20confirmed%20it,to%20break%20through%20a%20stalemate%20in%20the%20east>.

¹⁴⁶ David Swanson, “New Study Documents Depleted Uranium Impacts on Children in Iraq,” *Foreign Policy Journal*, September 21, 2019, <https://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/2019/09/21/new-study-documents-depleted-uranium-impacts-on-children-in-iraq/>.

leaves a residue of DU dust on everything it hits, contaminating the surrounding area with toxic waste that has a half-life of 4.5 billion years, the age of our solar system, and turns every battlefield and firing range into a toxic waste site that poisons everyone in such areas. DU dust can be inhaled, ingested, or absorbed through scratches in the skin. DU is linked to DNA damage, cancer, birth defects, and multiple other problems.¹⁴⁷

The children of Fallujah must be jumping for joy that Ukrainians will soon be blessed with such similar afflictions by their Western saviors and rejoicing that the evil Putin will be arrested by the same international institution that the United States threatened to invade if any American were to be tried for their myriad of war crimes.

Of course, the United States is not alone in this brand of bioterror; Israel deployed depleted uranium munitions during its ceaseless bombardment of Syria, as reported by *The Jerusalem Post*.¹⁴⁸ Israel also openly used other chemical agents such as white phosphorus, as Human Rights Watch documents in its scathing article, “Rain of Fire: Israel’s Unlawful Use of White Phosphorus in Gaza,” reporting:

Their [chemical] use in densely populated neighborhoods, including downtown Gaza City, violated international humanitarian law (the laws of war) which requires taking all feasible precautions to avoid civilian harm and prohibits indiscriminate attacks. The unlawful use of white phosphorus was neither incidental nor accidental. It was repeated

¹⁴⁷ Swanson, “New Study Documents Depleted Uranium Impacts on Children in Iraq.”

¹⁴⁸ Jpost.com Staff, “Israel used depleted uranium shells in Syria,” *The Jerusalem Post*, May 6, 2013, <https://www.jpost.com/Defense/Syria-Israel-used-depleted-uranium-shells-in-Syria-strike-312189>.

over time and in different locations...the IDF's repeated firing of air-burst white phosphorus shells from 155mm artillery into densely populated areas was indiscriminate and indicates the commission of war crimes.¹⁴⁹

Furthermore, an Israeli professor, Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian, the Lawrence D. Biele Chair in Law at Israel's Hebrew University, confirmed that Israel routinely uses the captive Palestinian population as a testing ground for new weapons.¹⁵⁰ Israel's practices of "surveying, imprisoning, torturing, and killing can be used as a laboratory for states, arms, companies, and security agencies to market their technologies as 'combat proven.'"¹⁵¹ Beyond weaponry and overt population control, "Israeli occupation authorities issue permits to large pharmaceutical firms, which then carry out tests on Palestinian prisoners."¹⁵²

Conclusion

As seen in Abby Martin's documentary film *Gaza Fights For Freedom*, detailing the Great March of Return in 2018, an Israeli sniper joyously celebrates, shouting, "Wow, what a video! Yes! That son of a bitch, what a video! Of course I filmed it. Wow, hit him in the head...What a legendary video," moments after shooting a Palestinian child behind a fence, it begs the question

¹⁴⁹ Human Rights Watch, "Rain of Fire: Israel's Unlawful Use of White Phosphorus in Gaza," hrw.org, Human Rights Watch, March 25, 2009, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2009/03/25/rain-fire/israels-unlawful-use-white-phosphorus-gaza>.

¹⁵⁰ Kathryn Shihadah, "Israeli prof: Israel tests weapons on Palestinian kids, tests drugs on prisoners," imec.org, International Middle East Center, March 2, 2020, <https://imec.org/article/israeli-prof-israel-tests-weapons-on-palestinian-kids-tests-drugs-on-prisoners/>.

¹⁵¹ Shihadah, "Israeli prof: Israel tests weapons on Palestinian kids."

¹⁵² Shihadah, "Israeli prof: Israel tests weapons on Palestinian kids."

what kind of remorse such an occupying force is capable of.¹⁵³ As the documentary shows, the entire Great March of Return was typified by Israeli snipers firing nearly indiscriminately at Palestinians, often using illegal rounds referred to as expanding bullets—prohibited by the 1899 Hague Declaration because, as *Vice* puts it:

They are fucking horrible: expanding on impact to increase the size of the wound, leaking those wounds of their blood more rapidly and devastating their internal organs. Use of them is listed as a war crime in the Statute of the International Criminal Court, but I suppose we should know by now that the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) are above little things like worrying about war crimes.¹⁵⁴

If a member of the occupation force that repeatedly refuses to take responsibility or investigate its actions will scream like an overjoyed child getting a puppy on Christmas after sniping a Palestinian child in the head, the half-hearted apologies and thoughts given like pulling fingernails over Shireen's death do not seem genuine. Perhaps the crocodile tears would appear more genuine if the highly militarized Israeli police force did not assault Shireen Abu Akleh's pallbearers and tear gas her mourners on their way to her resting place. If ranking members of the Israeli government did not lie in a coordinated fashion to blame Palestinians and leave the backdoor open for the potential for future histories to reference a dubious investigation conducted by the offending party that nearly every other investigation contradicted.

When asked what she hopes Shireen's legacy will be, Lina

¹⁵³ *Gaza Fights For Freedom*, directed by Abby Martin (2019; United States: Empire Files, 2019), DVD.

¹⁵⁴ Evans, "Israeli Soldiers Are Allegedly Killing Palestinians with Horrible Illegal Bullets."

In Memoriam

Abu Akleh responded:

She stood for truth, peace, and justice. Her voice will continue to resonate in Palestine, in the Arab world, and abroad. She was a human being before she was a journalist. She humanized the Palestinians; she took her time to understand and listen to them because she was also part of that struggle for freedom. She carried all their voices, she entered every single village, city, refugee camp.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁵ Mansoor, “Niece of Slain Al Jazeera Journalist Shireen Abu Akleh.”

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Author Bio

Devin Gillen is currently finishing his first year in California State University, San Bernardino's history department Master of Arts program. He hopes to graduate by this time next year in 2024. After this Devin plans to make a living through some mixture of education at a community college level, substitute teaching, publishing as an editor and author or journalist, and artistic endeavors. He is primarily interested in United States foreign policy, particularly from the Cold War to the present with a focus on "Third World" nations. Through his writing and future education, he hopes to spread awareness to Americans of the extreme suffering their taxpayer dollars finance across the globe. Prior to COVID restrictions, Devin planned to create a zine of independent art and essays on United States-backed historical atrocities, and other geopolitical realities often ignored in history classes, to hand out at local DIY backyard shows. After graduating Devin hopes to pick this idea back up with dreams of turning it into a semi-official publication.



History in the Making

Reviews

Television Review: *The Gilded Age*

By Rossandra Martinez and Daniela Bedolla

Introduction

Period dramas have a way of transporting viewers through costumes, dialogue, and careful attention to set dressing. But one thing period pieces often don't do is explore the many nuances of an era.¹ HBO's 2022 show, created by Julian Fellowes (*Downton Abbey*, *Gosford Park*, *From Time to Time*) *The Gilded Age*, explores the intersectionality of race, class, and gender during the Gilded Age (1870-1890). This show has a majority white cast and one main African American character, Peggy Scott. The decision to showcase an educated black woman highlights a suppressed narrative and storytelling of black history through period pieces. *The Gilded Age* deconstructs the difference in opportunities for educated black women and limited social mobility in white high society. Although the characters are fictional, *The Gilded Age* remains true to the gender and racial norms in the nineteenth-century; popular culture tends to focus on poor, uneducated black people, whereas historical content and accuracy are relatively high.

¹ Ashawnta Jackson, "Julia C. Collins & the Black Elite of the Gilded Age," *JSTOR Daily*, March 21, 2022. Accessed March 19, 2023. <https://daily.jstor.org/julia-c-collins-the-black-elite-of-the-gilded-age/#:~:text=The%20answer%20is%20that%20Peggy,by%20an%20African%20American%20woman>

Reviews

Fellowes' production team had historical advisors, including Rutgers history professor Dr. Erica Armstrong Dunbar. She says,

I was very interested in working on a project that I thought had the opportunity to explore Black New Yorkers in the nineteenth century in a way that was different from anything that we've ever seen on television, in a way that represents what we would call now a middle- or upper-middle-class Black family.²

According to Eric Foner,

[T]he term Gilded Age is influenced by the novel by Mark Twain and Dudley Warner in 1873. The term gilded, represents the shiny golden surface of the era with a more complex and deceptive undercurrent. It lasted roughly between 1870-1890 and was a time of economic prosperity.³

Through the Transcontinental Railroad following the Civil War, the American economy was able to rebuild itself to an industrialized economy; factories, mining, railroad construction, and advancement in technologies created a growing labor force. As seen in *The Gilded Age*, old and new money families competed for high social status due to new money flowing in from railroad construction. Corruption was rooted in the corporate dominance of politics and the extreme poverty faced by those left behind in the race to the top. The gap between the 'haves' and 'have nots' grew as new money flowed in and old money was pushed aside.

² Amy Kuperinsky, "HBO's 'The Gilded Age' centers Black New Yorkers with help from N.J. professor," *NJ.com*, February 14, 2022. Accessed March 18, 2023. <https://www.nj.com/entertainment/2022/02/hbos-the-gilded-age-centers-black-new-yorkers-with-help-from-nj-professor.html>

³ Eric Foner, *Give Me Liberty! An American History*, Seagull 7th Ed. (W.W. Norton & Company, 2023), 615.

Through the tension between the Russells and Bartons and the rest of the “old families,” such as the Astors, viewers experience a lens into nineteenth-century America. Director Michael Engler describes his motivations for the show due to his peaked interest in the changes in American social stratification; Engler says, “There was more than just your background and your legacy that would determine what opportunities and obstacles were in life and meritocracy took over social order.”⁴ The definitions of merit shift with each character within *The Gilded Age*; despite the endless amount of money Bertha Russell has access to, she cannot buy her way into society. Invisible and unspoken social rules dictated the successes of newcomers during the Gilded Age, old money determined who would enter or be shunned from society.



Figure 1: “The Condition of the Laboring Man at Pullman”⁵

⁴ “Director Michael Engler on Directing the Russell’s Lavish Ball in *The Gilded Age*” *AwardsDaily*, June 19, 2022, 1:26.

⁵ Image from Sarah Jones “Lessons From the Gilded Age.”

The Gilded Age, Episode 1, takes place in New York in 1882, one of the numerous cities with a booming economy and population growth. The first episode centers around “Marian Brook, a naïve young woman, [who] enters the rigid social scene of New York’s elite society and learns about life’s harsh realities from both her aunts and her love interest.”⁶ Marian’s character represents the fresh eye, naive and wistful of a new beginning in New York. It is through Marian that viewers are able to question and analyze the difference between new and old rules.⁷ The Gilded Age was a time for wonder and newcomers to make their name in the new economy of New York. Sarah Jones from *The New Republic* says,

[It] was a time of exploding economic inequality, stagnant living standards, growing concern about monopolies, devastating financial crises...brazen political corruption, frequent pronouncements that the American republic was doomed, and seemingly unending turmoil over race and national identity.⁸

There were a multitude of factors that determined what national identity was and how different definitions of success played into social norms. The theme of new versus old money is repeated as construction of railways and buildings gave room for upward mobility. Mrs. Russell represents a threat of new money towards old money, as a new addition to society, she must prove her worth despite continuous exclusion from all wives through

⁶ “The Gilded Age: Is the HBO historical drama based on a true story?” *Marca*, February 2, 2022, Accessed March 28, 2023.

<https://www.marca.com/en/lifestyle/tv-shows/2022/04/02/62487861268e3e1a088b4593.html>

⁷ Director Michael Engler on Directing the Russell’s Lavish Ball in *The Gilded Age*, 2:09.

⁸ Sarah Jones, “Lessons From the Gilded Age,” *The New Republic*, June 13, 2018, <https://newrepublic.com/article/149005/lessons-gilded-age>

fundraisers, balls, and any social events. The wives and bankers that Mr. Russell encountered face the repercussions of excluding Mrs. Russell, due to his loyalty and love for his wife, Mr. Russell strong-armed the board by buying shares as they entered the market, proving “he has more money than God.”⁹ The Russells highlight the parallels between real events of old and new money clashing, as well as the deconstruction of social hierarchies and class structures during the Gilded Age that are primarily influenced by the additions to the transcontinental railroad and big banks/legislation. This is seen with Mr. Russell, a “robber baron” who was inspired by real-life historical figure, Jay Gould. According to a *Marca* article,

Gould was really vilified in the papers at the time. He was someone who became a kind of living embodiment of all of the inequalities of the era. He has such insane levels of power and sometimes he uses them on really vulnerable people and just crushes them like ants.¹⁰

He was able to buy shares as they were coming in to keep his investment afloat in spite of the board passing on a law that Russell initiated. Due to this action, one of the members committed suicide because he gambled his entire life: house, family, and lifestyle, and he could not fathom a world in which he lost his material belongings. The episode focuses on Mr. Raikes (a young lawyer from Doylestown) and Marian; bankruptcy courts see rail companies go under, taking their owners and investors down with

⁹ *The Gilded Age*, Season 1, Episode 1, “Never the New.” Directed by Michael Engler and Salli Richardson, written by Julian Fellowes, featuring Carrie Coon, Christine Baranski, Louisa Jacobson, Morgan Spector, Cynthia Nixon, Denée Benton, Taissa Farmiga, Thomas Cocquerel, aired January 24, 2022, on HBO, <https://www.max.com/?reason=anonymous&returnUrl=https%3A%2F%2Fplay.max.com%2Fshow%2F2537da31-ff99-4195-a53e-e0e1ddb1d67e>

¹⁰ “The Gilded Age: Is the HBO historical drama based on a true story?”

them.¹¹ The beginning of the show focuses on Miss Brook and how her father left her penniless and lied her entire life, leading to her having to move in with her aunts, Agnes van Rhijn and Ada Brook. This is a clear example of women portrayed as damsels in distress and completely reliant on men for financial support and social mobility. The United Manhattan Trust was founded in 1797 by Arnold van Rhijn, among others.¹² Ward McAllister is the bridge between new and old money; as he determines who is suitable to come into society, he reports to Mrs. Astor, who eventually gives her permission. Gladys Russell is based on real-life Consuelo Vanderbilt, a naive girl eager for love and to make her debut and officially come out, which the first season ends with her debutante ball.



Figure 2: Taylor Richardson (left), Debra Monk, Simon Jones, Kristine Nielsen, and Ben Ahlers play members of the service staff of an elite New York family in "The Gilded Age." Alison Cohen Rosa | HBO¹³

¹¹ *The Gilded Age*, Season 1, Episode 1, "Never the New," 3:07- 4:03.

¹² *The Gilded Age*, Season 1, Episode 1, "Never the New," 12:28.

¹³ Kuperinsky. "HBO's 'The Gilded Age.'"

Figure 1 (The Condition of the Laboring Man at Pullman) describes the economic environment during the Gilded Age, lower and middle-class workers continued to plummet as the wage group increased with more and more money flowing into railroad construction. Luxury and leisure spending increased as families attempted to outdo each other by building social capital; this is seen with the luxurious construction of the Russells' home, a massive two-story home on 61st Street. Mr. Russell tells Mrs. Russell "I hear fifth avenue is slipping, no one wants to be south of twenty-third street," when she is invited to a luncheon with the socialites.

According to historian H.W. Brands, "As capitalism got bigger in scale, these concerns about the influence of big capitalism on democracy increased," Brands adds. "And they finally gave rise to these demands that big monopolies be reined in."¹⁴ Mr. Russell is the face of new money, and is planning on building a new railroad from New York to Chicago, which is next to existing railroad to prove to future business partners that once he asks a second time on a deal, he will utterly destroy their business. Throughout the show there are instances where Mr. Russell is able to use his money to influence and complete his own agenda. According to Engler,

It's just about this one family that fits into society and the world and the changing world but it's really how all the different factors in so many different areas of society are all affecting each other and are all pushing for their own voice their own influence and so it's the intersection between different parts of society and how they actually cause change and are affected by change is more complex in that way and how it relates to that particular moment what

¹⁴ Stefano Kotsonis and Meghna Chakarabarti "More than money: Antitrust lessons of the Gilded Age" *Wbur Radio*, December 28, 2022. <https://www.wbur.org/onpoint/2022/12/28/more-than-money-antitrust-lessons-of-the-gilded-age>

was happening in our society and the opportunities that were new that hadn't really existed before.¹⁵



Figure 3: Photo of Cynthia Nixon (left) and Christine Baranski.¹⁶

The dynamic between Mrs. Astor, Mrs. Van Rhijn, Mrs. Russell, and Marian depict old (Astor and Van Rhijn) and new money (Russell). Marian serves as the progressive and inquisitive eye of the viewer and newcomer. As seen in Figure 3, Ada and Agnes are dressed nicely with their hair up; their home has old-fashioned furniture and paintings. The Brook/Van Rhijn household is staffed with ladies' maids, housekeepers, a chef, and a butler named Bannister. Their home was built in 1850, which shows how deep their family roots are in New York; everyone in *the Gilded*

¹⁵ Director Michael Engler on Directing the Russell's Lavish Ball in *The Gilded Age*, 3:09- 3:57.

¹⁶ Alice Burton, "The Gilded Age Recap: Escape From Mrs. Astor's" *Vulture*, March 14, 2022. Accessed April 3, 2023. <https://www.vulture.com/article/the-gilded-age-season-1-episode-8-recap-tucked-up-in-newport.html>

Age knows the Van Rhijn/Brook household.¹⁷ In the first episode, Agnes explains to Ada about her late brother that the Brook women are now forced into poverty, and it will be years before they are able to make their money back. Ms. Van Rhijn continues to be the matriarch of the family. Agnes says to Ada, “Her father [Marian’s father] robbed us of all that we possessed. Invitations, charity appeals, questions from bankers and brokers.”¹⁸ This is a similar situation that happened to women that were entirely dependent on men; Marian’s father was their tie to the Mayflower origins. Speaking about the Brooks/Van Rhijn family, Agnes said, “The old have been in charge since before the revolution. They ruled justly until the new people invaded.”¹⁹ In *The Gilded Age*, this feeling of “invasion” of new money is shared by all old families, which is why the Russells are met with such hostility. The threat of new blood and strangers represents a massive paradigm shift that parallels real-life events during the actual Gilded Age. What producers and directors are attempting to recreate is a rare feat due to the lack of Gilded Age filmography.²⁰ These three-dimensional characters each offer their own representation of different social strata in nineteenth-century New York.

The racialization of work labor and racism is shown through the character, Peggy Scott. She is ambitious, advocates for herself and equality, inquisitive, and literate (everything that white protagonists usually are). Peggy’s character pushes against the narrative of black people being illiterate and uneducated during this time; also, the fact that she is a strong, literate black woman creates a remarkable character arc and depth. According to Ashwanta Jackson from *JSTOR Daily*:

¹⁷ *The Gilded Age*, Season 1, Episode 1, “Never the New.” 25:20.

¹⁸ *The Gilded Age*, Season 1, Episode 1, “Never the New.” 7:49.

¹⁹ *The Gilded Age*, Season 1, Episode 1, “Never the New.” 28:30.

²⁰ Director Michael Engler on Directing the Russell’s Lavish Ball in *The Gilded Age*, 2:09.

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Peggy is a composite of several real-life women, and one in particular, Julia C. Collins, was a trailblazer. Her 1865 novel, *The Curse of Caste; or The Slave Bride*, is often cited as the first written by an African American woman. “Neglected African American women’s stories, if they survive at all, often survive in fragments that cannot be fully comprehended without first being recontextualized.”²¹

In *The Gilded Age*, Peggy learned to write and studied at The Institute of Colored Youth of Philadelphia, and her family resides in Brooklyn.²² This was an actual institution that was first opened,

In 1852 at 716-718 Lombard Street and provided a classical education to young African Americans (with a curriculum including advanced mathematics, sciences, English, philosophy, various social sciences, and classical languages) with a faculty entirely of African American men and women.²³

Peggy is introduced as a poor black woman boarding the train Marian is taking from Doylestown to New York. Peggy is forced to board last and has to sit in the back of the train, where everyone smokes and is huddled together. Peggy is kind enough to lend money when Marian loses her ticket; thus, a friendship is born when Marian sits with Peggy on the train. Upon arrival in New York, Peggy is soon hired as Mrs. Van Rhijn’s secretary, based on her knowledge of Pitman shorthand and education from The

²¹ Jackson, “Julia C. Collins & the Black Elite of the Gilded Age,” *JSTOR Daily*, March 21, 2022. Accessed March 19, 2023.

²² *The Gilded Age*, Season 1, Episode 1, “Never the New.” 26:39.

²³ “The Institute for Colored Youth” <http://moonstoneartscenter.org/the-institute-for-colored-youth/>

Institute of Colored Youth of Philadelphia. Peggy soon moves into the Brook/Van Rhijn household.²⁴ Peggy Scott and her mother are pictured in Figure 4; both women are dressed in modern dresses, untarnished, not hand-me-downs, as Marian initially assumed Peggy was poor. The Scott home is also staffed as the Van Rhijn home; only their staff are black.

As seen in the background of Figure 4, the Scott home is well-furnished and decorated with modern design. Peggy is constantly pushing herself to be better by becoming a writer of short stories and getting published in the newspaper. She continues to be a strong female character as she remains true to herself despite her family's clear disapproval of pursuing education. Irish immigrants that work for Mrs. Van Rhijn are angry with the idea of sharing a floor, bathroom, and food with Peggy. This tension highlights the racialization of the working class in New York. Armstrong, Mrs. Van Rhijn's maid, cries, "But are we to share the same floor? Same bathroom?" It is implied in this episode that Armstrong has strong social and racial biases regarding Peggy.²⁵ Peggy, sleeping on the same floor as house staff who are visibly upset at the idea of sharing space with a black woman. Armstrong asks her if she drinks coffee, sighing and rolling eyes at her presence. Armstrong feels that Peggy is beneath her and the idea of waiting on Peggy decreases the overall Van Rhijn/Brook household reputation. Peggy has to explain racism to Marian as to why certain cabs will not take her or why when she interviewed for a white newspaper, the editor told her to change a black female character to white, and hide her identity. Multiple scenarios are shown where racism and bigotry hinder Peggy from equality. The only characters that treat Peggy as an equal are Marian, Mrs. Chamberlain, Elizabeth Barton, and Ada and Agnes. When Peggy is offered a job at the *New York Globe*, a colored newspaper, she is able to work alongside real-life historical figure Thomas T.

²⁴ *The Gilded Age*, Season 1, Episode 1, "Never the New." 31:54.

²⁵ *The Gilded Age*, Season 1, Episode 1, "Never the New." 30:10.

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Fortune. According to an interview with Denée Benton (Peggy Scott),

Seeing Peggy actually set a boundary and see it be respected is how we get to show Black and white intimacy on screen in an unharmed way that doesn't tell a narrative that we hope to see, but that is a little more true to what it takes to build that kind of trust.²⁶

The representation of poise and advocacy that Peggy Scott brings to *The Gilded Age* is what makes her character crucial to storytelling and combating harmful racist narratives surrounding educated black women in nineteenth-century America.



Figure 4: Denée Benton (right) and Audra McDonald. Photo by Alison Cohen Rosa.²⁷

²⁶ Kelli Boyle, “‘The Gilded Age’: Denée Benton on the Importance of Peggy Scott” *tvinsider*, June 25, 2022. Accessed March 30, 2023. <https://www.tvinsider.com/1049935/the-gilded-age-denee-benton-peggy-scott-season-2-hbo/>

²⁷ Alice Burton, “The Gilded Age Recap: The Uninvited Guest,” *Vulture*, February 14, 2022. Accessed March 10, 2023.



Figure 5: Denée Benton (left) and Louisa Jacobson.²⁸

As Dave Itzkoff wrote in a New York Times piece on the addition of the character (played by Denée Benton), “[A]n elite Black population in this era of the city...is a factual reality, though one that is not often explored in popular culture.”²⁹ Peggy Scott is key to resisting oppressive histories, white savior complexes, and the whitewashing of black historical figures. According to the interview with Denée Benton, Season 2 of *The Gilded Age* will expand on the wealthy Black community in Brooklyn and Peggy’s storyline with her child.³⁰

<https://www.vulture.com/article/the-gilded-age-season-one-episode-four-recap.html>

²⁸ Boyle, “‘The Gilded Age’: Denée Benton on the Importance of Peggy Scott” *tvinsider*, June 25, 2022. Accessed March 30, 2023.

<https://www.tvinsider.com/1049935/the-gilded-age-denee-benton-peggy-scott-season-2-hbo/>

²⁹ Ashwanta Jackson, “Julia C. Collins & the Black Elite of the Gilded Age,” *JSTOR Daily*, March 21, 2022. Accessed March 19, 2023.

³⁰ Boyle.

The portrayal of hope and youth ignorance is through Gladys Russell, whose sole wish is to make her public debut. Marian acts as the audience to question these social strata and expectations of young women. Gladys is forced to listen to her mother, whose personal goal is not fully revealed until the end of the season. Mrs. Russell has her personal agenda to find the most suitable man for Gladys despite two to three attempts by Gladys to find love. In the third episode, Marian says to Gladys, “How strange these rules are. Why shouldn’t you go out to dinner with your brother and friends? What could be more normal?”³¹ Gladys is not “out”—has not made her public debut—and cannot appear at parties or get-togethers. Homes have to be “christened” before entertaining balls, having calling-ins, or look-ins. Mrs. Russell tried once and was shunned by the old families by order of Mrs. Astor, a prominent old money matriarch. Bertha Russell is unable to be welcomed into society without the blessing of Mrs. Astor. This rivalry is inspired by the real-life rivalry between Alva Vanderbilt, wife of robber baron William Kissam Vanderbilt (Bertha Russell), and real-life Mrs. Astor (Astor).³² According to Director Engler, “Bertha, on one hand, represents the most aspiring striving” new money and strength in New York, making her space in the new society.³³ Thus, Mrs. Russell spends the majority of the season trying to appease and buy her way into society with ridiculously large donations to Elizabeth Barton’s American Red Cross and any surrounding charities. The second episode ends with

³¹ *The Gilded Age*, Season 1, Episode 3, “Face the Music.” Directed by Michael Engler and Salli Richardson, written by Julian Fellowes, featuring Carrie Coon, Christine Baranski, Louisa Jacobson, Morgan Spector, Cynthia Nixon, Denée Benton, Taissa Farmiga, Thomas Cocquerel, aired January 24, 2022, on HBO, 27:42.

<https://www.max.com/?reason=anonymous&returnUrl=https%3A%2F%2Fplay.max.com%2Fshow%2F2537da31-ff99-4195-a53e-e0e1ddb1d67e>

³² Natalie Issa, “The Gilded Age’ Season 2: The real-life Astor family,” *Deseret News*, March 2, 2023. <https://www.deseret.com/entertainment/23622685/the-gilded-age-season-2-the-astor-family>

³³ Director Michael Engler on Directing the Russell’s Lavish Ball in *The Gilded Age*, 1:50.

Mr. Russell buying out a bazaar for war widows, and he is able to flex his money on the women that were excluding his wife. This is where the recurring theme of old versus new money comes into play. The real-life Astors, “according to Britannica, the Astors are a wealthy family that began in the fur trade and expanded to real estate investments in New York City. During the Gilded Age, the Astor family was at the center of upper New York society.”³⁴

Conclusion

Through *The Gilded Age*, we are able to determine the gender, racial, and social dynamics that were in place in nineteenth-century New York. The decision to use the tension and social capital of the wives and daughters of robber barons was a way to humanize and understand the deep-seated social rules of American society, what it means to be American, and how to make your name with new money versus old money. According to Issa, “1880s New York City was filled with opulence and classism, with an elite group of wealthy, prominent families ruling New York’s upper society.”³⁵ *The Gilded Age* remains as true to history as possible, despite it being a dramatized version of history. The addition of Peggy Scott and her likeness to Julia C. Collins is a major step for accurate and positive representation of literate black women during the Gilded Age. Additionally, the other characters based on actual historical figures, such as Mrs. Astor and Mrs. Russell, do the real Mrs. Astor and Vanderbilt justice in capturing their essence and rivalry. It is through these social, political, and racial dynamics that we as consumers are able to educate each other and ourselves on actual historical events and early origins of the United States stemming from New York’s booming economy and ties to both old and new money.

³⁴ Issa, “‘The Gilded Age’ Season 2: The real-life Astor family.”

³⁵ Issa, “‘The Gilded Age’ Season 2: The real-life people behind your favorite characters.”

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Book Review: American Exception: Empire and the Deep State

By Devin Gillen

American Exception: Empire and the Deep State, published in 2022 by Aaron Good, a Ph.D. Political Science graduate of Temple University Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, focuses on “the relationship between expansive [United States] foreign policy and democratic decline.”¹ *American Exception* refines Good’s Ph.D. dissertation, “American Exception: Hegemony and the Tripartite State,” into an accessible yet thorough examination of the American empire, the deep state, elite criminality, and parapolitics, “a system or practice of politics in which accountability is consciously diminished” through American, world, economic, and intellectual history.² Demonstrating his tripartite state model, Good takes aim at the nexus of United States foreign policy and private wealth that has undermined the rule of law and accountability for high criminality, key characteristics of democracy.³ Good argues the post-World War II national security state, publicly justified by Cold War anti-communism, “allowed for the securitization of politics...[which] is toxic or even fatal for democratic/republic institutions.”⁴

The exception the title refers to, or *exceptionism* as Good terms it, is not the standard formulation of American exceptionalism. It is defined by “the institutionalized abrogation of the rule of law...while practices of plausible deniability [have] preserved a degree of democratic legitimacy.”⁵ In other words, democratic institutions are thoroughly corrupted but remain semi-functional as a rhetorical smokescreen to cover up the corruption

¹ Aaron Good, *American Exception: Empire and the Deep State*, (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2022), 2.

² Good, *American Exception: Empire and the Deep State*, 42.

³ Good, *American Exception*, 1.

⁴ Good, *American Exception*, 8.

⁵ Good, *American Exception*, 33.

and systematic criminality inherent in United States foreign policy post-World War II. Most ranking United States officials regularly commit high crimes against the Constitution itself, which the supremacy clause affirms ratified treaties as the “highest law of the land.”⁶ Considering that the United Nations Charter outlaws aggression against other nations and the United States’ history of interventions, attacks, unilateral sanctioning, and political coups against supposed enemies, the high criminality of the political elite is glaringly apparent.⁷

Domestically, historic levels of economic inequality are enabled by socioeconomic elite criminality that goes unpunished, such as the “scores of unadjudicated crimes related to the financial crisis of 2008 and 2009.”⁸ Good notes that free markets in a democratic system would theoretically spread the wealth of a nation and its industrial capacity to benefit the people. Interestingly, the opposite has happened in the United States, but China’s nondemocratic state has “pursued policies that have benefited the majority of the population in ways that theoretically mirror what would be predicted in a democracy.”⁹ The United States’ neoliberal turn towards privatization instead resulted in a further decline of democratic characteristics, evident in policies that promoted deindustrialization and allowed historic levels of debt to accumulate for individuals but bailed out banks and funded profit-driven corporations to construct a historically enormous military.¹⁰ Furthermore, United States foreign policy continuity throughout supposedly independent and ideologically diverse presidential administrations suggests democratic institutions do not hold much decision-making power.¹¹

Good asserts that the American deep state is one of three elements of his theoretical tripartite state, the others being the

⁶ Good, *American Exception*, 2-3.

⁷ Good, *American Exception*, 2.

⁸ Good, *American Exception*, 3.

⁹ Good, *American Exception*, 269.

¹⁰ Good, *American Exception*, 3-4, 270.

¹¹ Good, *American Exception*, 69.

public/democratic state and the security state.¹² The concept of the deep state, bastardized during the Donald Trump Administration (2016-2020), originated in Turkey as “a closed network said to be more powerful than the public state:” but has since been expanded on by American government insiders like Mike Lofgren, former Senior Analyst for the Senate Budget Committee (amongst other congressional roles), as well as outsider critics like UC Berkeley professor Peter Dale Scott.¹³ A fundamentally nebulous thing, “The institutions that exercise undemocratic power over state and society collectively comprise the deep state. The deep state is an outgrowth of the *overworld* of private wealth.”¹⁴ It is not a conspiratorial hidden hand only visible to the third eye a la the Illuminati, institutions such as the Rockefeller-funded Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) “is a visible, partially transparent component of the deep state. It is a nominally non-governmental entity funded by Wall Street in order to cultivate and utilize foreign policy...[which] logically and demonstrably serve the interests of the Wall Street overworld which funds the organization.”¹⁵

According to Good’s tripartite model, expanding on Michael Glennon’s double government analysis, the public state consists of the outward-facing democratic governmental institutions and policies taught to most of the public in schools as the defining aspect of the state. Glennon calls this sect the Madisonians, who appear in control but are not capable of checking what he termed the Trumanite Network, and Good refers to as the security state.¹⁶ The Trumanite Network refers to “hundreds of executive branch officials who make national security policy,” consolidated under the National Security Act of 1947 that centralized military control under the Secretary of

¹² Good, *American Exception*, 5.

¹³ “Michael “Mike” S. Lofgren,” *C-span.org*, accessed April 20, 2023, <https://www.c-span.org/person/?67009/MichaelMikeSLofgren>

¹⁴ Good, *American Exception*, 5.

¹⁵ Good, *American Exception*, 230.

¹⁶ Good, *American Exception*, 66.

Defense, established the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Joint Chiefs of Staff, and National Security Council, signed off by President Harry S. Truman (1884-1972)—who also created the National Security Agency (NSA).¹⁷ By 1949, the Hoover Commission revealed civilian control of the military “scarcely existed” in particular departments and noted the Joint Chiefs’ ability to act “virtually [as] a law unto themselves.”¹⁸ The Joint Chiefs even secretly created their own response to potential conflict, hidden from the president and any other agency, detailed in a document known as the Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan (JSCP).¹⁹ The JSCP called for nuclear strikes against the Soviet Union and China “that if triggered, would have likely destroyed human civilization.”²⁰ In under five years, aspects of the security state already undermined democratic oversight.

However, “Since the Trumanites (deep and security state) power flows from the legitimacy of the Madisonian (public) institutions and since the Madisonian institutions’ legitimacy depends upon the perception that democratically elected leaders are in charge, both institutions have strong incentives to foster the illusion of Madisonian control.”²¹ In other words, the security state uses public institutions to grant its power but is able to act without public or democratic oversight. Fundamental aspects of this Trumanite Network, or security state, are then co-opted or corrupted by wealthy interests, forming the deep state. Examples of those who capitalize on connections between the security state and the overworld of private wealth, thus instruments of the deep state, include former Director of National Intelligence James Clapper, previously an executive at Booz Allen, “a private intelligence firm that is dependent on government contracts for nearly all its revenue,” and perhaps most infamously brothers, John

¹⁷ Good, *American Exception*, 66, 47.

¹⁸ Good, *American Exception*, 48.

¹⁹ Good, *American Exception*, 49.

²⁰ Good, *American Exception*, 49.

²¹ Good, *American Exception*, 52.

Foster Dulles (1888-1959) and Allen Dulles (1893-1969).²² From an elite political family, the brothers were both previously lawyers at the Wall Street firm Sullivan & Cromwell, where they did business with “key figures in Nazi Germany” as well as assisted in the orchestration of multiple business coups as Secretary of State and Director of the CIA (DCI) respectively.²³

Here, Good breaks with Glennon’s dual state analysis. According to Good, Glennon’s analysis never touches on the core motivations of United States foreign policy, driven increasingly by aspects of the security state which are subservient to wealthy interests—the deep state aspect of the tripartite state model. This model of the state and the conclusions which Good arrives at through logical materialist analysis are heavily indebted to the works of C. Wright Mills and his seminal 1956 work *The Power Elite*.²⁴ Mills, unfortunately, died before many of his theories and assumptions on the function of American corporate, military, and political power were reaffirmed by declassified documents. In Mills’ formulation, it was the government, the military, *and the corporation* that functioned as “command posts of modern U.S. society.”²⁵ Where Glennon, and most mainstream analysts, fail to factor material and financial motives into theory, “the sustained and often coordinated influence of what Mills calls *the corporate rich* (i.e., the *overworld*) best explains the pathological inertia and tragic continuity of U.S. foreign policy.”²⁶ The interplay of private wealth and policy that *seemingly* eluded other scholars, or was derided as a conspiracy theory, is evident through logical materialist analysis.

Good’s thorough cross-examination of other thinkers, ideologies, strategists, and intellectuals ultimately skewers mainstream historiography’s abandonment of materialist analysis since the Cold War, critiquing those nominally on the left, such as

²² Good, *American Exception*, 107.

²³ Good, *American Exception*, 107.

²⁴ Good, *American Exception*, 1.

²⁵ Good, *American Exception*, 76.

²⁶ Good, *American Exception*, 76.

advocates of postmodern, culturalist, and social histories that entirely eclipsed materialist thinking. Given that by 1990 only ten percent of articles published in *Diplomatic History* focused on economic aspects of United States foreign policy, Good considers that “perhaps the decline of materialism in diplomatic history is, by and large, an example of “winners” getting to write the history.”²⁷ Good is not advocating for a Marxist turn, but that turning away from the rational explanatory reasoning that materialist analysis provides has harmed serious historical and political analysis. Instead, a cultural theory like Samuel Huntington’s *Clash of Civilizations* provides justifying myths for the United States’ myriad interventions in the Middle East.²⁸ Others suggest the benevolent promotion of democracy has suddenly taken hold of the world’s richest and most powerful people to explain the United States’ militarized global presence. Or, if the analysis of so many academics, the media, and politicians refuses to acknowledge material interests, then:

Maybe it does require an inferential leap to arrive at the assumption that wealthy and powerful elites seek to dominate their societies politically and economically in order to further aggrandize their wealth and power. The “leap” entails assuming the elites enjoy their status- a social circumstance at which they or their ancestors arrived intentionally and which they seek to maintain or improve.²⁹

This tongue-in-cheek leap is made impossible for most observers by mainstream media outlets controlled by wealthy elites that have deep connections to elements of the deep and security state. Frank Wisner (1909-1965), Deputy Director of the CIA from 1950 to 1965, was “the creator of the CIA’s propaganda apparatus. He termed this CIA disinformation machine, “the Mighty

²⁷ Good, *American Exception*, 28.

²⁸ Good, *American Exception*, 71.

²⁹ Good, *American Exception*, 27.

Wurlitzer,” and he ran it with the help of numerous journalists and media outlets.”³⁰ *The Washington Post* is singled out as an especially problematic contemporary example, owned by Jeff Bezos, founder of Amazon, which has a \$600 million contract with the CIA, “The *Post* would go on to promote the militarism of the GWOT [Global War on Terror] as well as subsequent wars and regime change campaigns...which offers readers a lively spectrum of opinions ranging from pro-war ‘liberal interventionist’ to pro-war neoconservative.”³¹ As Good later puts it, “By now, it should be clear that mainstream journalists, social scientists, and historians cannot grapple with the dark realities of our historical epoch.”³² This passage sums it up nicely: “In particular, the mainstream does not acknowledge the extent to which militarism, covert/paramilitary violence, state lawlessness in foreign policy, and exploitative international institutions are all of a piece-essential aspects of the U.S.-managed global capitalist system.”³³

Much of the front half of the book is a rigorous recounting of key developments, conflicts, and intersections of intellectual and academic thought regarding the state, democracy, international relations, and history. The multidisciplinary analysis and synthesis of radically different thinkers from Plato (427-347 BCE), to John Locke (1632-1704), to Jurgen Habermas (b.1929), to Nazi theorist Carl Schmitt (1888-1985), to name a few, is more convincing than the schizophrenic postmodern rhetorical puzzle such a smattering of ideas could render.³⁴ This also grounds the tripartite state theory in a lineage of intellectual thought while contending with the challenges inherent to the study of the parapolitical, wherein “many of the most relevant actors actively strive to obscure their activities and thereby falsify contemporaneous journalistic accounts and the historical record.”³⁵ In other words, studies of the

³⁰ Good, *American Exception*, 204.

³¹ Good, *American Exception*, 205.

³² Good, *American Exception*, 255.

³³ Good, *American Exception*, 20.

³⁴ Good, *American Exception*, 44, 85, 93.

³⁵ Good, *American Exception*, 42.

inherently covert are necessarily subject to difficulties surrounding the secrecy and obfuscation that typify covert operations, military and political.

Good does not attempt to hide the limits of his methodology. At the same time, the inclusion of well-known historical events and archival historiography complement the deep politics/deep historiography (where “public records are often falsified or nonexistent”); he recognizes that “it is not possible to assert that any account of such matters is unimpeachable or *the* definitive theory.”³⁶ However, this does not doom any inquiry, “one can study U.S. foreign policy and arrive at reasonable conclusions” through a critical reading approach similar to “Kremlinologists who studied the Soviet Union with considerable success during the Cold War.”³⁷ Political “realists” John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt’s 2007 *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* is also considered a successful example of deep political analysis as “part of the Israel Lobby’s success stems from the fact that its power had been seldom acknowledged or elaborated upon in the mainstream of academic and public discourse.”³⁸ As noted, the mainstream media and academics turning a blind eye to aspects of the deep state empower the deep state while hiding its influence in a similar fashion.

The back half of the book is a historical recounting of how the tripartite model aspects interacted and developed from World War II up to the present day, with examinations of the actors behind historical instances such as COINTELPRO, Watergate, and the Iran-Contra scandal, among other events.³⁹ Perhaps the nucleus of the deep state, the State Department’s *War and Peace Studies Project*, guided by the CFR before and during World War II, “in essence, mapped out the plans for creating a U.S.-dominated postwar world.”⁴⁰ This required the creation of a massive military

³⁶ Good, *American Exception*, 43.

³⁷ Good, *American Exception*, 43.

³⁸ Good, *American Exception*, 19.

³⁹ Good, *American Exception*, 10, 66.

⁴⁰ Good, *American Exception*, 91.

bureaucracy that “with considerable influence from the corporate overworld...would eventually give rise to the globe-dominating postwar U.S. deep state.”⁴¹

These interests converged again after the war to solidify their power in the 1950 National Security Council (NSC) study known as NSC-68, “a grand strategic policy proposal...to institutionalize the military-industrial complex or—in a larger sense—to establish the privately incorporated permanent war economy.”⁴² Written by Paul Nitze (1907-2004), a protege of defense secretary James Forrestal (1892-1949), under the direction of Secretary of State Dean Acheson (1893-1971), NSC-68 claimed Soviet aggression was a dire threat that necessitated rearmament despite strategists’ comments, like that of renowned Cold Warrior George Kennan (1904-2005), that, “Russia has only recently been through a tremendously destructive war; that the Soviet economy has far less that it can afford to lose than we have; and the Soviet leaders will not inaugurate a type of warfare bound to lead to great destruction.”⁴³ Though NSC-68 is commonly understood to have been precipitated by the Korean War (1950-1953), Good argues the faltering postwar aerospace industry, deeply connected to key sectors of the economy like steel and powerhouses such as the Rockefeller-owned Chase National Bank, was a key motivation to restart the war machine.⁴⁴ By 1948, the Secretary of the Air Force wrote to Winthrop W. Aldrich (1885-1974), chair of the President’s Committee for Financing Foreign Trade and Chase National Bank, as well as brother-in-law to John D. Rockefeller (1839-1937), asking for help to get “get the money to get what we want.”⁴⁵

The 1953 CIA-backed coup in Iran further demonstrates the power this nexus of overworld wealth, or the deep state, has over democratic institutions. Codenamed Operation Ajax, it was

⁴¹ Good, *American Exception*, 118.

⁴² Good, *American Exception*, 91, 130.

⁴³ Good, *American Exception*, 121.

⁴⁴ Good, *American Exception*, 123.

⁴⁵ Good, *American Exception*, 123.

essentially an oil company coup in which the MI6 and CIA were roped in by rogue elements of the agency acting against Truman's demands, later secretly approved by President Dwight Eisenhower (1980-1969).⁴⁶ Conveniently, Eisenhower received "substantial support from the oil industry" during his campaign for president.⁴⁷ Furthermore, Truman's Justice Department attempted to prosecute oil cartels under antitrust legislation in 1952, and the case was quickly dropped from a criminal to a civil charge under Eisenhower.⁴⁸ The civil case was handed to John F. Dulles' State Department, which, "up to that point had never prosecuted an antitrust case."⁴⁹ Prior to being completely defanged, the investigation ordered Standard Oil of New Jersey (now largely Exxon) to release relevant documents, but the company's lawyer, Arthur Dean, refused.⁵⁰ Like the Dulles', Dean was a Sullivan & Cromwell man and refused to comply on the grounds of "national security" by invoking the Soviet menace.⁵¹

The Iranian coup that illegally deposed Iran's democratically elected head of state was a product of elements of overworld wealth and the semi-legitimate security state forming a demonstrable deep state, entirely untethered from democratic oversight.⁵² This could be understood as, in other words, the military-industrial-complex that Eisenhower famously warned about in his farewell address in 1961.⁵³ That term itself is somewhat of a remix of C. Wright Mills' earlier "privately incorporated permanent war economy."⁵⁴

Some conclusions may be controversial, even dismissed as conspiracy theorizing for dabbling in the realm of the parapolitical. However, factual explanations of now-confirmed plots that were

⁴⁶ Good, *American Exception*, 133.

⁴⁷ Good, *American Exception*, 133.

⁴⁸ Good, *American Exception*, 133.

⁴⁹ Good, *American Exception*, 133.

⁵⁰ Good, *American Exception*, 132.

⁵¹ Good, *American Exception*, 132.

⁵² Good, *American Exception*, 132.

⁵³ Good, *American Exception*, 133.

⁵⁴ Good, *American Exception*, 124.

publicly denied and covered up for decades, such as the 1953 Iranian coup, could have been dismissed under the inherently derogatory rubric of conspiracy theory—and it necessarily *was* a conspiracy; it just happened to be factual. According to declassified memos, DCI James Schlesinger (1929-2014) said to President Gerald Ford (1913-2006), “There is a layer in the Agency [beyond] which you can never find out what is going on.”⁵⁵ Another DCI, Richard Helms (1913-2002), commented, “I don’t know everything which went on in the Agency; maybe no one really does.”⁵⁶ Considering the comments of ex-DCIs, and the history of coverups and falsehoods to cover the CIA’s tracks, it would seem the conspiracy theory label should not instantly disqualify them as false.

Perhaps most controversial, the publisher of the book, Skyhorse Publishing, has been criticized for publishing works by the likes of Roger Stone (b.1952), Woody Allen (b.1935), Alan Dershowitz (b.1938), and others questioning central claims around COVID-19.⁵⁷ When questioned by *Vanity Fair*, founder Tony Lyons insisted that Skyhorse published books that others would likely ignore, born out of a desire to question all assumptions and look at “both sides” of an argument.⁵⁸ If the concern is political partisanship, as sections of this *Vanity Fair* article seem to suppose, *American Exception* condemns the Trump Administration that Stone and Dershowitz worked for. If the concern is around the factual nature of the claims made, then the claims should be debunked on their merit, not the merit of an author or publisher. Perhaps the most condemning aspect about the end product of this Skyhorse book, in which Good admits that the study of the parapolitical cannot be definitive, is that the publisher could use more editors to catch the few minor grammatical errors found.

⁵⁵ Good, *American Exception*, 160.

⁵⁶ Good, *American Exception*, 160.

⁵⁷ Keziah Weir, “Skyhorse Publishing’s House of Horrors,” *Vanity Fair*, September 17, 2020, <https://www.vanityfair.com/style/2020/09/skyhorse-publishings-house-of-horrors>

⁵⁸ Weir, “Skyhorse Publishing’s House of Horrors.”

Building on works like journalist and founder of *Salon*, David Talbot's *The Devil's Chessboard*, the CIA's involvement in the assassination of John F. Kennedy (JFK) is taken for granted instead of relitigated. Good argues that JFK's attempts to wind down the Cold War, expressed in his Commencement Day speech in 1963, was the deep state actors' primary motive to kill him. As JFK said that day, anathema to militant hawks and weapons contractors, "What kind of peace do we seek? Not a Pax Americana enforced on the world by American weapons of war... not merely peace for Americans but peace for all men and women."⁵⁹ Kennedy's refusal to acquiesce to CIA planners' hopes to send overt military forces into Cuba to assist the purposely doomed Bay of Pigs operation (1961), the subsequent firing of Allen Dulles, and sympathy to Third World nationalists like Patrice Lumumba (1925-1961), already created deep antipathy between the administration and CIA by the time of the speech.⁶⁰ JFK's wish to Arthur Schlesinger (1917-2007) to "splinter the CIA into a thousand pieces and scatter it to the wind" was squashed with the bullet that killed him in Dallas on November 22, 1963.⁶¹

Suspicious actors and events surrounding the killing, like Allen Dulles' primacy over the Warren Commission investigation of JFK's assassination, are filtered through the tripartite framework to illuminate the theory. But this formulation also logically explains lingering questions about the assassination and investigations, such as the Warren Commission's findings that one 1976 Gallup poll suggested as low as eleven percent of the country found believable.⁶² Law professor at Notre Dame and Cornell, chief counsel and staff director of the House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA, 1977-1979), G. Robert Blakey (b.1936), remains convinced that JFK was murdered by the state and following investigations were coverups.⁶³ Former Senator and

⁵⁹ Good, *American Exception*, 139.

⁶⁰ Good, *American Exception*, 137-138.

⁶¹ Good, *American Exception*, 138.

⁶² Good, *American Exception*, 140.

⁶³ Good, *American Exception*, 140.

HSCA committee member Richard Schweiker (1926-2015), one time Ronald Reagan (1911-2004) running mate, said in 1977 of the accused, Lee Harvey Oswald (1939-1963), “Everywhere you look with him, there are fingerprints of intelligence.”⁶⁴ Schweiker, particularly dismayed that Allen Dulles withheld information surrounding the CIA’s assassination plots, later told the BBC that “The Warren Commission has, in fact, collapsed like a house of cards. I believe it was... one of the biggest cover-ups in the history of our country.”⁶⁵

Furthermore, those who questioned the government’s official narrative surrounding 9/11 were reaffirmed by a slate of reporting in early 2023 that alleged the CIA knew that some of the hijackers had entered the United States but chose not to disclose the information to the FBI or public, and subsequently covered up their association with al-Qaeda.⁶⁶ These reports were based on an unearthed court filing of a 2016 affidavit signed by Guantanamo military commission investigator Don Canestraro, a veteran of the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA).⁶⁷ Regardless of the degree to which the CIA knew of the hijackers or infiltrated al-Qaeda, as Good argues, the official 9/11 narrative and the theory the Bush administration (or whoever) planned the attacks (or let them happen) are both theories about global conspiracies of dozens, if not hundreds, of actors to attack the United States, but only one is a “conspiracy theory.”⁶⁸ It was easy to brush off the notion of CIA involvement in the attacks as conspiracy theories from radicals; however, it is harder to condemn a DEA agent and official military investigator as a radical.

⁶⁴ Good, *American Exception*, 167.

⁶⁵ Good, *American Exception*, 168.

⁶⁶ Branko, Marcetic, “Mainstream Media Doesn’t Care That the CIA May Have Helped Cause 9/11,” *Jacobin*, May 5, 2023, <https://jacobin.com/2023/05/cia-fbi-911-hijackers-cover-up-bush-media>

⁶⁷ Marcetic, “Mainstream Media Doesn’t Care That the CIA May Have Helped Cause 9/11.”

⁶⁸ Good, *American Exception*, 271.

Good and some of the conclusions reached may also seem radical, but the water Good came up in was decisively establishment. Previously a member of Barack Obama's (b.1961) 2008 presidential campaign staff, Good calls this part of his "traumatic" political development from "an Obama campaign staffer—even attending the Inauguration and Staff Ball in 2009—to becoming a staunch critic of the fundamental lawlessness and avarice that animates the American state."⁶⁹ Throughout *American Exception*, Good holds no partisan punches, condemning the Obama Administration that armed jihadi paramilitary forces to destroy Libya, attempted to destabilize Syria, did not reverse unconstitutional NSA spying practices, and was guilty under the stipulations United Nations Convention Against Torture (CAT) for the failure to indict W. Bush Administration (2001-2009) officials for war crimes.⁷⁰

Ultimately, the tripartite state model and formulation of the deep state laid out in *American Exception* offers, through materialist analysis, a coherent model of government that takes seriously the unsavory implications that a near century of foreign intervention, hindsight, and de/classified documents provide. The formulation of the deep state provided is also useful for those who wish to scratch below the surface of Trumpian and other partisan or thoughtless uses of the term. Unless one can take the ahistorical narcissistic assumption things *really* are different *now* in the year of our Lord, and the government would not lie to us about its actions as it consistently has, then the sordid history covered should be of concern to anyone interested in the American political system.

⁶⁹ Good, *American Exception*, IX.

⁷⁰ Good, *American Exception*, 36, 60, 69.

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Author Bio

Devin Gillen is currently finishing his first year in California State University, San Bernardino's history department Master of Arts program. He hopes to graduate by this time next year in 2024. After this, Devin plans to make a living through some mixture of education at a community college level, substitute teaching, publishing as an editor and author or journalist, and artistic endeavors. He is primarily interested in United States foreign policy, particularly from the Cold War to the present, with a focus on "Third World" nations. Through his writing and future education, he hopes to spread awareness to Americans of the extreme suffering their taxpayer dollars finance across the globe. Prior to COVID restrictions, Devin planned to create a zine of independent art and essays on United States-backed historical atrocities and other geopolitical realities often ignored in history classes to hand out at local DIY backyard shows. After graduating, Devin hopes to pick this idea back up with dreams of turning it into a semi-official publication.



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