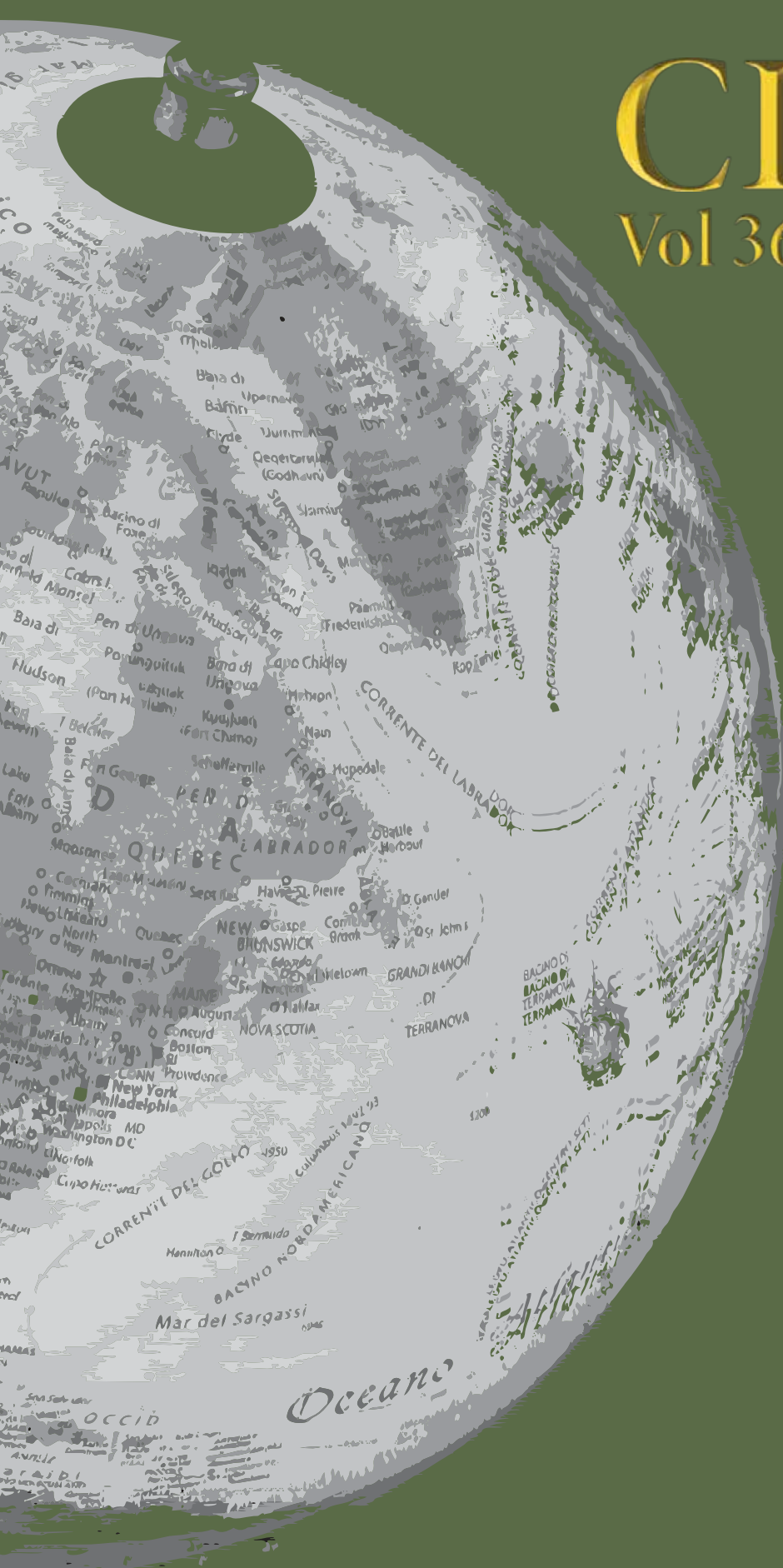


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CLIO

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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Readers,

We chose the articles in this volume to show how local and global histories speak to each other. The essays reach toward larger global conflicts, including questions of genocide, regime change, identity, and the nature of warfare, and they reach toward issues closer to home, including the survival of Native voices, marginalized voices in California health care, the loss of a music titan, and the local conspiracy against perceived communist agendas. Our histories, while local, are intertwined on a global scale.

Our special features extend that work by bringing voices that have too often been marginalized into the conversation. We feature the winners of the Anansi Project alongside a wrap-up of our interviews with the participants. We also include papers from students in the Transforming Outcomes Project at Sacramento State (TOPSS), a degree-completion program offered inside Folsom State Prison and Mule Creek State Prison through a partnership between Sacramento State and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. To feature their scholarship within these pages is to insist that historical work belongs to anyone willing to do it. We close with a tribute to the women who shaped the customer base of Tower Records, a complement to Sid Akbar's article on the rise and fall of that institution.

The art of published scholarship is at a turning point, and we are honored to showcase the work of truly exceptional writers. The editors of this issue brought their full attention and care to every part of it, whether in editing, design, event planning, or fundraising. We would be remiss not to recognize those who went above and beyond to bring this volume into a changing world. We are grateful for their work. The editors would also like to thank Ciaran G. Henderson, whose initiative in building bridges brought Cordy Michaud to design the front cover.

This issue would not exist without the support of the College of Arts and Letters, whose Year of the Arts and PergolARTS Project provided the funding that brought this volume into print, and the Department of History, which has supported *The Clio* and its editors year after year. We are grateful to the Anansi Project and the Shattuck Endowment for their continued investment in student scholarship.

This issue was a labor of love. Many of our editors are graduating, and this volume is part of how we say goodbye to a department that has supported us not only as scholars but as people. It is also the last issue under the advisement of Dr. Aaron Cohen, whose steady, patient guidance has ushered so many *Clio* issues and editors to first place in national competition, and whose support has grown our talents as writers and editors.

For some of us, as our last semester comes to a close, we want to thank you all for reading and enjoying the hard work in this book.

With gratitude,

Amy Davey

Mikayla J. Gonzales

Eric Ramirez Panzieri

IN MEMORIAM

Recollections of Charles Roberts

The following pieces are a collection of various responses to beloved faculty member, Dr. Charles Roberts, passing in November of last year. Below, you will find how one man shaped Native American studies within Sacramento State and influenced both colleagues and students alike to pursue and come to terms with our own local history. As you read the following passages, it becomes evident that Dr. Roberts's thirty-nine years on this campus have touched many, and his passing brought forth fond memories and gratitude from those who knew him.

It is vital that we honor those who have come before us, as they build the foundations upon which we continue to develop our respective fields. Dr. Roberts shaped the way in which Native American studies is conducted on our campus, but his legacy is not limited to his accomplishments. As you read the following pages, we ask you to remember professors in your life who have impacted your experience and who have provided the roots from which your futures will sprout.

A Recollection of Meeting Charles Roberts

April 7, 2026

By Dr. Brendan Lindsay, Professor of History, Sacramento State

I first met Charles Roberts at an annual California Indian Conference (CIC) in the early 2000s, while I was still a graduate student. We met purely by chance. We sat together for a time and he struck up a conversation with me, asking me about my studies and what I was researching at the time. That conversation, I later realized, epitomized Dr. Roberts. He was gently spoken, honestly interested in what students were learning about, always encouraging of their efforts, and never without a kind word of support. I went on to meet him several more times, the most memorable of which was at my job talk given at Sacramento State in 2013, at which he welcomed me warmly. I cannot say for sure, but he seemed pleased with both the talk and that we had met yet again.

Facebook Post

November 17, 2025

By Dr. Terri Castañeda, Emeritus Professor of Anthropology, Sacramento State

This weekend we lost Charles Roberts (Choctaw, 1941-2025), the grandson of Lesa Phillip Roberts (Mississippi Choctaw) & Jesse Roberts (Oklahoma Choctaw). He was born in Oklahoma, but his family migrated to California when he was just a young child. Losing his mother at 7 years old, he was raised by his grandmother, Lesa. When he retired, Annette Reed organized a symposium in his honor and I dedicated a portion of a related museum exhibit to Charles, who helped me by offering reams of Choctaw research materials and family photos of which he was duly proud. Among Charles's most popular courses was California Indian History. He was a warm and giving colleague. I dedicated my book to him. He reviewed the manuscript, double-checked the spellings on my dedication page, and made suggestions that I integrated into the final manuscript. I took a copy of the book over to him when it was published, doing a quick exchange on the porch, since we were at the height of COVID lockdown (Nov. 2020). He will be sorely missed by all of us.

Tribute

November 18, 2025

By Drs. Chris Castañeda, Khal Schneider, and Brendan Lindsay, Professors of History, Sacramento State

We are saddened to note the passing of Charles Roberts, historian of Native America and professor of History and Native American Studies at Sacramento State, on November 15, 2025. Dr. Roberts (Choctaw) began teaching at Sacramento State in 1970, where he developed some of the first classes on Native history in any history department in the country. He contributed his teaching and his scholarship on Choctaw history to the work of a generation of historians whose study of Native America challenged and enriched our understanding of the American past at the end of the twentieth century. In the early twenty-first century, he wrote urgently and successfully in defense of the field and the need to “maintain American Indian History as a high priority” at Sacramento State. The history of Native America, of “the land and its peoples,” he argued, is of “intrinsic interest” for students invested in finding the “voice and agency” of “peoples generally ignored in the overall master narrative of American history.” After thirty-nine years of teaching, research, and service in support of the University and its students, he retired in 2009. He will be sorely missed, but not forgotten.

Email Regarding Charles Roberts

Received November 19, 2025

By Kevin A. Tierney (Sac State alumnus)

Thank you for this notification. Dr. Roberts (along with Dr. Pitti) played a significant role in my master’s program. When I signed up for a colonial history course, every book had an indigenous people’s perspective. It forced me to take a deep dive into a perspective I had not experienced prior. Dr. Roberts opened my eyes to Native history and profoundly impacted my view of history as a whole. I ended up doing my thesis on the reporting of Native issues during the California Gold Rush in Sacramento area newspapers. Dr. Roberts made my pursuit of my masters in history a wonderful, enlightening journey and I’m very sorry to hear of his passing. He was one of a kind and I am confident his work enlightened many.

Sincerely,

Kevin A. Tierney

Email Regarding the Passing of Charles Roberts

Received December 5, 2025

By Dr. Annette L. Reed (Tolowa Dee-ni’ Nation), Dean of Students, Wileety: Native American College, Sacramento State

Dr. Charles Roberts, Choctaw, taught at Sac State in the Departments of History and Ethnic Studies (Native American Studies) for 39 years. After Sac State students went out in protest, demanding to have faculty who reflected their own identities and demanding the creation of Ethnic Studies curriculum, the University hired faculty in 1970 in response. He was one of the early Native American Studies faculty, serving on committees for the program. He developed course in Native American History and California Indian History. He served on the hiring committee who hired me in 1998, along with Frank LaPena. He attended many community events over the years. He will be missed by family, friends, and community members.

Email Regarding the Passing of Charles Roberts

Received November 19, 2025

By Dr. Albert L. Hurtado (Sac State alumnus/Emeritus Paul H. and Doris Eaton Travis Chair of Modern American History and Professor of History at the University of Oklahoma)

I am sorry to learn that Charles has died. I was a student in his first Native American History class in the spring of 1974, but I had known him for a couple of years before that. I hung out with him and his wife Jane and a few other grad students. He was still ABD at that time, and so was “one of us.” He was very quiet, as anyone who spent time around him would know. But he read voraciously and spent a lot of time perusing National Archives microfilm collections. I suppose that by the end of his life he was one of the most knowledgeable scholars in California Indian history as well as the history of his own Choctaw Nation.

Charles gave the most moving presentation that I have ever seen at an OAH meeting in Reno in the late 1980s. The paper was a biography of his grandmother Lesa, a story that included an account of the death of Charles’s mother Pearl who died when he was a child. He explained how he was given a paper bag containing his mother’s things after her death — his inheritance. “I have it with me now,” he said. And then he pulled each thing from the bag and explained what it was. I can only imagine what a gut-wrenching experience it was for quiet Charles to do that in front of a room full of strangers.

Charles was a mentor to many Native American students who passed through Sac State. His gentle demeanor and kindness no doubt helped many of them through their college trials. It was a privilege for me to have known that good man.

Al Hurtado



ERASING DIVERSITY: THE ANFAL CAMPAIGN AND SADDAM HUSSEIN'S POLICIES TOWARD IRAQ'S MINORITIES

ETHAN J. CHAPMAN

Abstract: Saddam Hussein's 1988 Anfal campaign functioned as a state coordinated project aimed at crushing Kurdish dissent, erasing Kurdish cultural and national identity, and forging a homogenized Iraqi state unified under Arab nationalism. Situating this campaign within the historical context of the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988), as well as the numerous Kurdish nationalist uprisings in previous years, this article illuminates the logic behind the murderous operation. Rather than representing a single and unique chapter in Ba'athist Iraq's violent legacy, the Anfal campaign embodied a larger pattern of coercion and diversity erasure aimed at minority communities within the state. This article utilizes both primary and secondary sources, including a number of Human Rights Watch testimonies, Iraqi High Tribunal trial transcripts, newspapers, and scholarly monographs. The employment of the Anfal campaign as a case study in this article reveals not only the human cost of authoritarian governance, but also the intentional manipulation and erasure of minority identity to consolidate power within such regimes.

The Kurdish people are the largest ethnic group in the world with no designated state of their own.¹ Numbering around 40 million people in the Middle East and spanning across Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria, the Kurdish people maintain a distinct ethnic identity despite strategic state measures to eradicate such sentiments. Turkey, throughout the twentieth century, waged a cultural repression campaign aimed at undermining Kurdish collective identity. Likewise, in 1962, the Syrian Ba'athist regime stripped 120,000 Kurds of their citizenship, rendering entire families legally invisible.² Measures such as denying citizenship, erasing language and cultural institutions, and restricting political organization were designed not simply to repress Kurds, but to weaken the foundations needed to articulate, mobilize for, and ultimately claim an autonomous Kurdish state.

Oftentimes, such centralized approaches were violent in nature. An infamous example of this could be found in the Anfal campaign carried out in Northern Iraq from 1986 to 1988, in the midst of the Iran-Iraq war. This mass killing and deportation operation conducted under Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist regime was one of the most devastating assaults not only on the Kurdish people, but on their bid for national autonomy. Saddam Hussein's Anfal campaign exemplifies Iraq's broader policy toward ethnic and sectarian minorities, exposing recurring patterns of authoritarian governance, coercion, and demographic engineering. Through violence and repression, Saddam sought to forge a homogenized Iraqi state unified under Arab nationalism.

This paper draws on a combination of primary and secondary sources to examine the Anfal campaign and its historical context. Primary sources include official Iraqi government documents captured after 2003, testimonies collected by Human Rights Watch and other investigative bodies, and transcripts from the Iraqi High Tribunal's Anfal Trial. These materials provide direct insight into state policies, military operations, and survivor experiences. A variety of secondary sources are also utilized, including Kanan Makiya's *Republic of Fear*, which illustrates clearly the structure and aims of the Ba'athist state.

Methodologically, this paper employs a historical-analytical approach, drawing connections between state policy, patterns of violence, and legal interpretations of genocide. This is a work of political history, examining top-down measures taken by Iraq to stifle Kurdish identity and autonomy. This is also a work of social and cultural history, analyzing the campaign's impact on communities, cultural erasure, and the demographic consequences of state violence. The paper is divided into several sections, including a historical and political background section, the implementation of state violence section detailing the actual Anfal campaign, the Ba'athist broader goals section where the Anfal is related to more examples of Ba'athist homogenization efforts, and an aftermath and consequences section. Such organization was designed to demonstrate how the events reflect Ba'athist principles and were not merely isolated incidents of violence.

Understanding this campaign sheds light not only on the human cost of authoritarian rule but also on how regimes manipulate ethnic and religious divisions to consolidate power. This research examines how Saddam Hussein's policies toward minorities within Iraq manifested in the Anfal campaign, revealing broader patterns in the

regime's approach to diversity and control. Specifically, focus will be placed on the Halabja massacre, in which 5,000 Kurds were ruthlessly murdered through the use of chemical weapons. Such tactics justify categorizing the campaign as genocidal, even though the international community has not formally recognized it as such. Saddam Hussein's centralized state homogenization project often resorted to violent tactics, resulting in coercive assimilation of Kurdish populations and the denial of Kurdish statehood. Such violent measures should be examined to better understand the political motivations behind them, as well as the sort of steps international communities can take to prevent such horrors in the future. Understanding the Anfal campaign is crucial not only for grasping the trajectory of modern Iraqi and Kurdish history but also for advancing broader discussions of genocide, state violence, and collective memory. Ultimately, this paper aims to contribute to a more accurate historical understanding and to support ongoing efforts toward justice, recognition, and the preservation of collective memory for the victims and their descendants.

The logic of the Anfal campaign cannot be divorced from either the Iran-Iraq War, nor the decades-long conflict between Kurdish nationalist groups and the central Iraqi government before it. The Barzani rebellions of the mid-20th century were foundational in shaping both Kurdish nationalism and the Iraqi state's evolving approach to minority governance long before the rise of the Ba'ath Party. Led by Mulla Mustafa Barzani, the uprisings in the 1940s and 1950s articulated, for the first time in a sustained and organized form, Kurdish political aspirations for autonomy within Iraq. Mulla Mustafa emerged as the central figure of the Kurdish national movement after leading the defense of the short-lived Republic of Mahabad (1946) and later returning to Iraq to mobilize widespread support among Kurdish tribes, intellectuals, and peshmerga fighters. Barzani's demands were relatively moderate in principle; he called for cultural rights, linguistic recognition, administrative autonomy in predominantly Kurdish regions, and equitable political representation in the Iraqi state.³ However, these demands challenged the foundational Arab nationalist identity of successive Iraqi governments. The rebellions thus highlighted the inherent tension between Kurdish claims to nationhood and the efforts of Baghdad to consolidate a unified, centralized state. The Barzani rebellions are important because they laid the groundwork for the later Kurdish-Iraqi conflict that intensified under the Ba'ath regime. They established Kurdish autonomy as a recurring national question that no Iraqi government could ignore and set precedents for both armed resistance and political negotiation. Understanding these early uprisings is essential for situating the later Ba'athist suppression of Kurdish identity, including the Anfal campaign, within a longer historical continuum of unaddressed political demands and contested state formation.

The establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the subsequent Iran-Iraq War, are also essential to understand the developments of the Anfal campaign. The destabilizing factor of war made Saddam Hussein particularly paranoid about a successful Kurdish rebellion. On February 1, 1979, the exiled Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini returned to the streets of Tehran for the first time in fifteen years. The charismatic leader was regarded as almost prophetic by a sizable portion of the religious population of Iran, whose aspirations to establish a spiritually pure Iran and rid the nation of the Shah had reached new heights.⁴ Other revolutionary figures in Iran who harbored more secular visions for the country's future were, nonetheless, optimistic for the revolution's trajectory, given the strong oppositional figure Khomeini was in contrast to the Shah Reza Pahlavi. This optimism was soon stifled under the almost immediate violent crackdown on political dissidents. Communists, secular liberals, and former regime loyalists alike were purged from public office by the newly fashioned Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.⁵

Amid fears of a CIA-influenced coup, university students mobilized mass anti-American demonstrations after the deposed Shah arrived in the United States in October 1979. One such event spiraled to new extremes on November 4, 1979, when four hundred students climbed the walls of the American embassy in Tehran and took sixty-six American hostages.⁶ It was becoming increasingly clear that the revolution in Iran had taken a dark turn, replacing one dictator with another. The new revolutionary Islamic regime, however, did not wish to contain its ideology within state lines. There was a strong sentiment to "export" the revolution among the entire *ummah* (the global Muslim community).

Baghdad's Saddam Hussein, head of the secular Iraqi Ba'athist regime, viewed this sentiment as a threat. Furthermore, Iran and Iraq had been squabbling for years over border provinces inhabited by Kurds.⁷ Hedging his bet that the rapidly changing Iranian regime and society were too embryonic to fend off an invasion, Saddam launched

an attack on September 22, 1980. Saddam's estimation turned out to be gravely mistaken. This marked the beginning of the Iran-Iraq War. In the midst of the war's security crisis, the Ba'athist regime used the conflict as a means to treat the Kurds as an internal enemy, paving the way for the mass violence that followed.

Although the beginning of the war favored Iraq, the Iranian resistance stiffened as the years went on. Taking advantage of its superiority in raw manpower, Iran became infamous for its "human wave" tactics.⁸ These consisted of thousands of Iranians, in many cases prepubescent males, clearing mine fields or absorbing artillery fire with their bodies, unrelentingly pushing forward until the Iraqi forces were overwhelmed by sheer numbers.⁹ Shiite Muslims, in general, hold a particular reverence for the concept of martyrdom by honoring the slaying of Husyan ibn Ali during Ashura. Some communities even engage in self-flagellation, embodying the martyrdom spirit themselves to a lesser extent. The Islamic Republic of Iran took advantage of this sense of idealized martyrdom among its religious populace during the war through the use of mass wave attacks.¹⁰ The impressionable youth were especially susceptible, as they were more willing to sacrifice their bodies for the state that framed the war through a religious lens.

Iraq, for its part, became infamous for its use of chemical weapons during the war. Tests by the Toxicological Institute in Gent, Belgium, found mycotoxin, also known as "yellow rain," as well as mustard gas in samples taken from Iranian soldiers flown to hospitals in Vienna.¹¹ The use of chemical weapons during warfare was banned by the 1925 Geneva Convention for several reasons. This included the fact that such weapons were relatively imprecise because the chemicals do not distinguish between combatants and civilians when they travel through the air. Furthermore, after World War I, people deemed the devastating physical and mental effects of chemical weapons on survivors too gruesome and inhuman to allow in future conflicts. This ban did not stop Saddam Hussein, however, whose will to power consisted of a level of violence that defied international law and precedent.

The Iran-Iraq War lasted from 1980 to 1988, ending largely in a stalemate. Neither side gained any territory from the conflict. Estimates vary widely on the death count, ranging from 250,000 to as much as 1,250,000.¹² This scale of violence was incomprehensible, leaving hundreds of thousands dead in the dirt, and millions more grappling with the shadow of death in the years after. There was an overlooked killing campaign running concurrently in Iraq during this time, however, just as heinous and deserving of international attention. Between 1986 and 1988, Saddam Hussein, along with his cousin Ali Hassan al-Majid, carried out a mass genocidal campaign targeting the Kurdish populations of Northern Iraq. Using the Iran-Iraq War as justification for population control, the Iraqi regime killed, deported, and forcibly assimilated the minority Kurdish communities in what has since been dubbed the Anfal Campaign. Justifying their operation on the basis that they were targeting Kurdish military dissidents during the war, the Iraqi government, nonetheless, took the opportunity to attempt to purge the entirety of the minority identity that posed a threat to complete homogenization.

The 1993 Human Rights Watch report states that after 1986, the two major Kurdish parties, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and the Kurdistan Democratic Party, received Iranian support and sometimes conducted joint raids against Iraqi forces.¹³ According to international law, Baghdad was entitled to engage in counterinsurgency operations. However, the Anfal campaign was far from a mere targeting of military units. Saddam Hussein, along with Ali Hassan al-Majid, conducted a genocidal campaign cloaked under the rhetorical guise of being a counterinsurgency operation. Saddam aimed to crush the Kurdish nationalist spirit and cultural identity through mass executions, disappearances, deportations, destruction of villages, and Arabization measures directed at the survivors. Most scholarly estimates place the death count somewhere between 50,000 and 100,000 killed between February and September 1988.¹⁴ Many of the victims were women and children. This was the Anfal campaign.

Although it should be noted that between the years 1986 and 1989, the Iraqi government's destructive operations of Kurdish villages escalated and overlapped with the later stages of the Iran-Iraq War. There were many village destructions and deportations during these years that did not technically fall within the official campaign. This section analyzes the campaign's methods to demonstrate how the regime systematically pursued ethnic homogenization and cultural eradication. To do so, it is organized into three interrelated subsections: "Killings and Executions," "Deportation and Village Destruction," and finally "Chemical Attacks and the Halabja Massacre."

Although not chronological, this thematic division is designed to demonstrate how different instruments of state violence worked together to achieve the regime's goal of ethnic homogenization.

The killings during the Anfal were organized and precise. Many Kurds were herded by the Iraqi army to prison camps where they would meet their demise. The most notorious of these camps was Topzawa. Men and women were segregated immediately upon arrival. Young children were permitted to stay with their mothers.¹⁵ Conditions in the camps were horrific, particularly in the men's quarters. The holding block was crowded, often too packed for the inmates to lie down. The sanitation conditions were inhumane, undoubtedly leading to the spread of diseases. The Human Rights Watch Organization described the horrible conditions in detail, specifically mentioning how "The prisoners used cans in the room for their bowel movements, and urinated out of the door or simply on the floor where they stood. If they were fortunate, they might be taken to the toilet twice a day at gunpoint, in groups of five or ten, by guards who sometimes beat them on the way with a strip of coaxial cable."¹⁶ Beatings from the guards were routine, oftentimes for minor offenses such as standing up instead of squatting. There were reports of men with beards being singled out for torture, seeing as their facial hair was a sign of their Islamic fundamentalism and pro-Iranian sympathies.¹⁷ Stays at Topzawa were usually temporary, especially for men. They were either sent off to other prison camps or to killing fields.

Of the tens of thousands of Iraqi Kurds who were driven away in sealed vehicles from the Topzawa camp to their deaths, the Human Rights Watch report managed to find six who survived to tell their stories. Thirty-two-year-old member of the peshmerga, Muhammad, described in vivid detail being driven out in the night for many hours. Finally, they reached their destination, where he heard machine gunfire outside. According to Human Rights Watch:

The prisoners were hustled out into the darkness and searched for any identity cards and money that might have been missed earlier... The men were ordered to stand facing the edge of a freshly dug trench, just long enough to accommodate the twenty-eight bodies as they fell. The knot binding Muhammad's left hand had been carelessly tied, and he managed to tug it free of his wrist and bolt a moment before the soldiers opened fire.¹⁸

Other testimonies corroborated this style of killing, describing busloads of men being brought to the countryside at night, where they would be massacred by machine gun fire and thrown into mass graves.¹⁹

In many instances, men were executed for simply being within "prohibited zones" that the Ba'athist government had drawn up. These zones were designated as prohibited for occupation due to Peshmerga activities in the vicinity. However, they were often used as a convenient justification to slaughter all male populations that happened to find themselves living within these zones that the government deemed threatening. According to a former lieutenant colonel in the Iraqi Army, "We received orders to kill all Peshmerga, even those who surrendered.... Even civilian farmers were regarded as peshmerga if they were working within a prohibited area. All men in the prohibited areas... were to be considered saboteurs and killed."²⁰ These were the orders of Ali Hassan al-Majid, who aimed to clear the region of Kurdish males aged 15 to 60.²¹

Such killings were committed as discreet of fashion as could be managed on such an industrial scale. When graves themselves are discovered, it is oftentimes difficult to determine the identities of the dead, because the Iraqi army and police often transferred prisoners hundreds of kilometers away from their starting point for execution.²² Documents of identification were also stripped from detainees before the mass killings, dissolving any forms of individuality from the victims. Such tactics demonstrate the genocidal intentions of Saddam Hussein and Ali Hassan al-Majid, who used counterinsurgency rhetoric to justify their campaign of violence.

In reality, Iraqi Kurdish men in general, as opposed to merely militants, were singled out between the years of 1986 and 1989 for death on account of their ethno-national identity, as well as their gender. Fighting aged men posed a threat to the Ba'athist regime, considering the only way for them to establish an independent Kurdistan would be through the waging of war. However, women were not exempt from the killings either, as many perished in the inhuman conditions of the internment camps, the deportation campaigns, and chemical weapon attacks on civilian locations.

One of the central pillars of the Anfal campaign was the destruction of Kurdish villages and the deportation of the remaining populations. It is estimated that around 2,600 villages were destroyed during the campaign.²³ The Iraqi regime clouded their intentions within euphemisms, describing the deportation operations as a “return to national ranks,” and the “resettlement of the south.”²⁴ In actuality, such measures under the command of Ali Hassan al-Majid aimed to culturally erase the Kurdish identity through force. One of the central tenets of Ba’athist ideology was the eradication of subnational identities as well as the existence of minorities.²⁵ To combat the national autonomy of the Kurds, it was necessary to permanently erase the rural infrastructure that sustained Kurdish life in northern Iraq. These operations that were portrayed by the Ba’ath regime as counterinsurgency measures were, in fact, coordinated acts of social and cultural annihilation. The bulldozer became an iconic symbol of the Anfal, razing villages and forcing Kurdish relocation, as well as digging the mass graves of the executed. Ultimately, Kurdish deportations and village destruction were calculated measures to Arabize the region and homogenize the Iraqi state through force.

The typical pattern of destruction followed a systematic blueprint. Iraqi government forces would attack villages using artillery, conventional forces, and, in some cases, chemical weapons, to drive inhabitants from their homes. The aim was to steer civilians toward certain collection points near main roads where they were met by either the Iraqi army or Kurdish mercenaries who worked for the government.²⁶ Survivors were often rounded up and deported to resettlement camps or government-controlled cities. Men, particularly those suspected of supporting insurgents, faced a high risk of execution. Women and children were more often deported or detained, although exceptions occurred. This coordinated approach combined physical destruction with population displacement, serving both military and ideological objectives.

The women and children who were forcibly relocated to camps on the outskirts of their villages that were mandated to be destroyed often lived in harsh conditions. Arguably, in many cases, it may be a stretch to even categorize the holding facilities as camps at all due to their lack of basic necessities. Deportees of the destroyed city Koreme describe their living conditions in frustration, with one questioning, “What does one call a flat, windswept plain, without buildings, without the systematic provision of food, water... or shelters, onto which thousands of already weakened people were deposited over a few weeks at the beginning of autumn with winter approaching? The only structures were the guard towers with their machine guns...”²⁷ Many of the Kurdish villagers who approached the guards to ask for basic survival needs, such as food, water, and shelter, were met with the same cold words repeatedly: “Saddam has sent you here to die.”²⁸ The water that was occasionally provided was often unsanitary. Many pregnant women miscarried, as a result of stress and dehydration as well.²⁹ Many children, particularly those still nursing, also succumbed to the intense conditions. It was also common for mothers’ breasts to dry up due to malnutrition, contributing to high infant mortality rates.³⁰

The eighth surah of the Quran is titled Al-Anfal, which means “the spoils of war” in English. This name was chosen to cloak the Ba’athist regime’s ethnic cleansing campaign under the rhetorical guise of religious justification. Such heinous crimes were framed in religious language that suggested the actions were ordained by Allah. The title also reflected one of the most common occurrences undertaken by Iraqi forces before the destruction of the villages.

On June 20, 1987, Ali Hassan al-Majid issued a document inciting Iraqi forces to pillage, a clear violation of international law. The explicit order reads as follows: “Everything seized by the advisers [mustashars] and troops of the National Defense Battalions shall be retained by them, with the exception of heavy, mounted and medium weapons.”³¹ After the pillaging of the villages, which demonstrates a clearly malicious intent rather than merely precautionary measures to rid the area of potential counterinsurgents, the towns were destroyed. Homes, mosques, wells, and community centers were all bulldozed to the ground. Agriculture was destroyed. The land was made generally unlivable. Some were not forcibly deported to containment camps or executed. Between 65,000 and 80,000 civilians from the Badinan region fled to Turkey in 1988.³² Some fled into Iran. Either way, the actions of Saddam and Ali Hassan contributed to a massive population displacement.

Deportations and village destruction served the Iraqi regime’s homogenization project on several levels. The splitting up and redistribution of Kurdish populations weakened their ability to mobilize any sort of effective in-

surgency. This was a divide-and-conquer strategy. Furthermore, several men, women, and children died due to the poor conditions of the relocation camps. These deaths accompany the many thousands of those who were outright executed on the grounds that they posed a threat to the state because of their identity. The infrastructure and agriculture that facilitated an autonomous and self-determining Kurdish region were demolished. Those women and children who survived were absorbed into Arab cities and were expected to assimilate or face repercussions. The Anfal campaign had a profound effect not just on the bodies of Iraqi Kurds, but on the collective psyche as well. Those that survived lived under the shadow the regime had cast over them, operating under a republic of fear. This was how Iraq under Saddam achieved its Arabizing goals: through violence. One of the most horrific acts of the Anfal campaign was the Halabja massacre. An examination of the Halabja massacre is necessary not only because of its cruelty, but also because it exemplifies the nature of the Ba'athist regime, its homogenizing goals, and reveals the lengths to which Saddam and Ali Hassan would go to crush minority identity within Iraq.

Chemical attacks were a hallmark of the Anfal campaign. These attacks were not merely present in the Halabja massacre, although one may argue that the attack on Halabja was the deadliest manifestation of such tactics. The strategy was so commonplace that al-Majid earned the moniker "Chemical Ali" for his role in the attacks. In fact, recovered tapes from the failed 1991 Iraqi uprisings illuminated al-Majid's thoughts on chemical weapons: "I said I cannot let your village stay because I will attack it with chemical weapons... I will kill them all with chemical weapons! Who is going to say anything? The international community? Fuck them!"³³ Such measures are representative of the brutality of the Iraqi regime, as well as the rigidity of its convictions. The use of chemical weapons discredits the argument that the campaign was merely counterinsurgency measures. Chemical weapons detonated in civilian populations in which Peshmerga may be operating do not distinguish between the two in the way that more targeted artillery or bullets may. These tactics demonstrate a complete lack of regard for the well-being of innocent Kurdish civilians and indeed suggest that the terrorizing of the Kurdish population in general was the goal of the Iraqi state. The regime acted with no restraints, morally, militarily, or legally.

On April 16, 1987, Iraq became the first state to ever attack its own population with chemical weapons. Kurdish villagers in the Balisan Valley returned to their homes and air-raid shelters as a dozen Ba'athist aircraft came into view. They began unloading their bombs, unleashing columns of swirling white, gray, and pinkish smoke. Then the chemicals took effect. An elderly survivor of the attack described the scene in the following statement: "It was all dark, covered with darkness, we could not see anything, and were not able to see each other. It was like fog. And then everyone became blind."³⁴ People's faces turned black, and their arms developed painful swellings. A yellow discharge oozed from the eyes and nose. Many of those who survived suffered from blindness or severe vision disturbances. In Sheikh Wasan, survivors watched as a woman staggered around blindly, clutching her dead child, and not realizing it was dead. Some villagers fled to the mountains for cover and subsequently died there. Others, who had been closer to the place of impact of the bombs, died where they stood.³⁵ The following day, Iraqi forces entered the villagers' deserted homes, looted them, and then razed them to the ground with bulldozers.³⁶ Such methods became commonplace after this first incident. Ali Hassan al-Majid employed a variety of chemical weapons during the Anfal, including mustard gas, a blistering agent, and Sarin, a nerve agent known as GB.³⁷ Such tactics demonstrate a willingness to kill Kurdish civilians, not merely armed factions. The clearest example of this can be found in the Halabja massacre, where the pictures of dead women and children garnered international outrage.

In March of 1988, the PUK Kurdish militants liberated the city of Halabja during the Iran-Iraq War. They had been operating with Iran due to a convergence of interests, namely that both Iran and the Kurdish forces were aiming to chip away at Iraq's control of its Northern border.³⁸ After three days of heavy Iranian shelling, the city was liberated by Kurdish militants in a joint operation.³⁹ There were reports of a huge celebration, with townspeople dancing, singing, and praising their liberators.⁴⁰ The next day, March 16th, the Iraqi response began. The bombs began dropping in mid-morning. According to Human Rights Watch testimonies, the events were horrific for the people of Halabja, as "In the dim light... [d]ead bodies-human and animal-littered the streets, huddled in doorways, slumped over the steering wheels of their cars. Survivors stumbled around, laughing hysterically, before collapsing... Those who fled could barely see, and felt a sensation 'like needles in the eyes.' Their urine was streaked with blood."⁴¹ Survivors fled to the Iranian border. Those who took the main road risked exposure to more chemi-

cal attacks. In fact, most of those who died were on the roads outside of Halabja.⁴² Those who strayed from the main road for the mountain passes risked the ever-present menace of landmines.⁴³ After the seventeenth, the chemical strikes ceased. Iranian troops poured into the city in order to fortify their captured territory. The Iranian troops that streamed into Halabja did not warrant an Iraqi chemical attack or any sort of response at all.⁴⁴ The Halabja area remained quiet until July of 1988, when the Iranian forces withdrew. The war ended shortly after. Refugees would never be able to make a return home, for after retaking the city, Iraq leveled every structure in Halabja with bulldozers and dynamite.⁴⁵

While the city was under Iranian control, the Islamic Republic took advantage of the massacre and ferried in reporters to cover the crime. Pictures of dead women holding lifeless babies drew outrage in the international community. Many Iranian state newspapers framed the attack in religious terms, arguing that Saddam's attack on the city was because it was one of Iraqi Kurdistan's cultural and religious centers.⁴⁶ In contrast, Iraqi newspapers framed the Kurdish militants as traitors, thus justifying the collective punishment.⁴⁷ The United States largely condemned the attacks but did not issue any official sanctions against Iraq for them. In actuality, the international community's responses were very muted, as most Western powers had been actively funding Saddam's Iraq against Khomeini's Iran.⁴⁸ As with every catastrophe, governments took advantage of the bloodshed to push their ideological agendas. Those who survived the actual attacks were left to bury their dead and mend their wounds, both physical and psychological.

Although death estimates vary, it is widely believed that around 5,000 people were killed in the Halabja massacre, most of them being unarmed civilians. Around 10,000 more were wounded.⁴⁹ The attack was a psychological blow both to the Kurdish peshmerga and to their civilian sympathizers. The massacre was the definition of collective punishment, and lingered especially in the minds of non-combatant Kurds, who now had to grapple with the question of whether they were willing to pay with their lives for an abstract ideal of national autonomy. It was easier for active militants who were already putting their bodies on the line to accept such risks, but not as easy for the average Kurdish housewife, child, or elderly person. Such a tactic was undertaken to strike paranoia and subsequent obedience into the hearts of the Iraqi Kurdish populations, demonstrating yet again Saddam Hussein's violent measures to achieve homogenization.

Although the methods of the Anfal campaign varied from executions to mass deportations to chemical bombardment, they were united by the Ba'athist regime's overarching goal: the systematic elimination of Kurdish identity and resistance in northern Iraq. Targeted executions removed the most immediate threats, those being military-age men. The destruction of villages and displacement of populations reduced the chance of regrouping, as well as diminished the sense of community and cultural identity among the Kurdish populations. Chemical attacks terrorized civilians and demonstrated the Iraqi regime's commitment to eliminating minority identity in an attempt to Arabize and homogenize the state. These aims are evident because the Anfal campaign was not merely a counterinsurgency operation, nor a terror infused revenge tour; it was a manifestation of Saddam Hussein's broader policies towards minorities. By combining executions, mass deportations, and chemical attacks, the Anfal campaign exemplified the Ba'athist regime's vision of a homogenized Iraqi state, where any challenge posed by minority populations was met with a coordinated state response to suppress such dissenting identities.

The Anfal campaign can only be understood within the broader ideological and political architecture of Ba'athist Iraq, which was organized around an obsessive drive to eliminate diversity and consolidate absolute control. The malleability of identity to suppress dissent was an obvious state aim, resulting in the socio-political suppression of Iraqi minority groups such as the Kurds, Jews, and Shia Muslims in the context of the political sphere. Not all state homogenization tactics were as violent as the Anfal campaign. However, coercive measures on behalf of the Ba'athist government nevertheless demonstrate the tendency of authoritarian governments to shape social identity through force. The Anfal campaign was representative of the Ba'athist regime's broader vision of a homogenized Iraq through violence. It is also made evident through the examination of Iraqi policy, the aims and methods of authoritarian states in general. In this context, the Anfal emerges not simply as a military campaign, but as the most extreme expression of a governing ethos that sought to consolidate power by suppressing differences in all its forms.

Ba'athist rule in Iraq was built on an uncompromising vision of political and social homogenization, grounded in the belief that national unity could only be achieved through rigid ideological conformity and the erasure of competing identities. The regime's approach to governance, as described in Kanan Makiya's *Republic of Fear: The Politics of Modern Iraq*, functioned less as a conventional authoritarian system and more as a totalizing apparatus in which fear and surveillance were institutionalized as instruments of statecraft.⁵⁰ Political allegiance under Saddam was demanded, and compliance under the Ba'athist regime meant acceptance of the Arab unity rhetoric it espoused. Although Iraq was multiethnic, encompassing Kurds, Assyrians, Turkmen, and Jews, deviations from the national Arab ideal was regarded as a direct challenge to the state's authority to enforce such an ideal. The Ba'athist state enforced such identities through a variety of means, including the army, the police force, the secret police force *Mukhabarat*, security apparatuses, networks of informers, and state bureaucracies. At the center of the system of punishment and surveillance was torture.⁵¹ Such measures of cruelty were meticulously picked out by the Ba'athist regime as twisted inversions of values they desired to instill through pain. As Makiya observed, "Every form of punishment presupposes an idea of human nature and of how it can be manipulated to compel obedience."⁵² The result was an environment in which dissent was preemptively punished; individuality was subordinated to state-defined norms, and the boundaries of acceptable identity were narrowly dictated from above.

Such methods were made evident in the Ba'athist treatment of their Jewish population. Anti-Jewish sentiment in Iraq had been on the rise ever since the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948.⁵³ Most of the violent tendencies in Iraq was at first very much a bottom-up phenomenon. Demonstrations were organized and funds were raised by the masses to support Arab nationalization efforts in Palestine, while campaigning for the disenfranchisement of Iraqi Jews.⁵⁴ Such a strong common sentiment among Iraqi Arabs resulted in the government taking action as well. Legal, economic, and political measures were taken to isolate the Jewish community. Gatherings and weapon possession were banned, as well as the possession of Hebrew material. Police raids on Jewish homes intensified, resulting in many military tribunal hearings for Jews who were merely possessing symbols of their cultural identity.⁵⁵ Professing Zionists were promptly executed. In 1951, the Iraqi state passed legislation allowing Jews to renounce their Iraqi citizenship and leave the country permanently. Over two-thirds of the Iraqi Jews choose to do so. What they did not know, however, was that the Iraqi parliament had also decreed that all assets of fleeing Jews would be frozen. Once considered one of the most established Jewish communities in the Middle East, the Iraqi Jewry was reduced to poverty as a result of their decision to flee persecution.⁵⁶

In 1963, the Ba'ath party of Iraq seized power in a coup d'état. Under Ba'athist rule, conditions worsened even more for Iraqi Jews. According to a report on the Jews of Iraq: "Traveling abroad, even for medical reasons, became nearly impossible. Jewish students were largely barred from universities. Much of their individual and communal property was confiscated. Baghdad's thousand-year-old Jewish cemetery was demolished. Additionally, Jews were required to carry special yellow identity cards."⁵⁷ The Ba'ath regime was expelled from power within the same year but resumed control in 1968 after another coup d'état. In January of 1969, Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist regime declared a national holiday. One of the celebratory demonstrations was to hang nine Jews in the public squares of Baghdad on trumped-up charges of spying for Israel. Baghdad radio stations invited the masses to "come and enjoy the feast." A crowd of 500,000 Iraqis gathered to see the hanged Jews swinging from the scaffolds.⁵⁸ Jewish identity and culture were considered an alien presence in opposition to the homogenizing Ba'athist vision of pan-Arabism. Coupled with the political implications of being Jewish, Iraqi Jews were often on the receiving end of intentional cultural destruction. Places of worship were bombed. Family heirlooms and religious materials were seized and held in the *Mukhabarat's* Baghdad headquarters, reminiscent of the Nazi plan to establish a museum of an extinct race in Prague after the Reich's triumph.⁵⁹ Archaeological sites were destroyed if they contained Jewish remnants, smudging the historical record of Jewish identity. Ba'athist targeting of the minority Jewish community within Iraq demonstrates the state's intent to erase minority identity in favor of an Arabized Iraq.

Saddam's regime also targeted the Shia population. Although the majority of Iraq is populated by Shiite Muslims, they were a minority in the sense that they were grossly underrepresented in the governmental structure. This was for a variety of reasons. Although Ba'athist ideology was Arab nationalist and anti-sectarian in theory, it was Sunni dominated in practice. Sunni Arabs from Tikrit and other majority Sunni towns formed the basis of the mechanisms of power in Iraq. Furthermore, there had always been tension between Shiite clerics and whatever

centralist state happened to be in power in Iraq. The cities of Najaf and Karbala, two major sites of influence among the Shia community, were financially independent and intellectually autonomous due to this influence. This posed a threat to the authority of the absolute central control the Ba'athist government demanded, making the Shia clerics and by extension the entirety of the Iraqi Shia population natural enemies. After 1979, when the Ayatollah Khomeini came to power in Iran and headed a Shia Islamic Republic that rivaled the regional influence of Saddam's Ba'athist Iraq, Saddam became even more suspicious of his Shia population. He feared their loyalties lay in their religious affiliation over their national identity.⁶⁰ It was in 1991, however, following the Gulf War, that the most vivid examples of persecution against the Iraqi Shia became apparent.

In March of 1991, immediately after the First Gulf War, the uprisings within Iraq began. Kurdish and Shia militants, sensing the state's weakness, swept through the country taking control of over half of Iraq's territory. Kurdish militias took control of Kurdish majority cities in the North, while Shia militias captured important Shia Cities such as Basra, Najaf, and Karbala among many more. Emboldened by the United States politicians encouraging an uprising, militants and civilians alike demonstrated their desire to overthrow Saddam through both violence and popular demonstrations in the streets. However, the expected support from the West never came, and within a month the Ba'athist regime had gained back practically all of the territory they lost through a brutal crackdown campaign. The Human Rights Watch reports that loyalist forces killed thousands of unarmed civilians by firing indiscriminately into residential areas. Young people were executed in the streets, suspects were rounded up in house-to-house searches, and detainees were shot *en masse*. Helicopters tracked down unarmed civilians as they fled cities and exterminated them.⁶¹

In Basra, witness Hussein Ali Kazem recalls the slaughter of 400 people who had been captured and tied together in the town square.⁶² Ba'athist forces also reportedly used human shields within the city, either tying women and children to their tanks or forcing them to walk in front of them to act as a barrier.⁶³ Within Najaf, a rebel leader described the Ba'athist tactics as involving not only the targeting of civilians, but the deliberate undertaking of such tactics to break the psyche of the collective community and its revolutionary spirit. Human Rights Watch reported: "Then, at 8:15 in the evening, the army began bombarding the city heavily. Mostly hurt were the residential areas and not the rebel concentrations, since the idea was to scare people."⁶⁴ Karbala was the major Shia city that suffered the heaviest damage during and after the uprising. Some of Shia Islam's holiest shrines were destroyed by Ba'athist artillery fire, with thousands of rebels and civilians dying within the holy sites and the streets of the city.⁶⁵ In the years after 1991 until the US invasion of 2003, Shia communities of Iraq were severely restricted. Important religious pilgrimages were banned as well as public rituals, security forces surrounded shrine cities, and many Islamic clerics were arrested, exiled, or disappeared. Such systematic violence and repression are reminiscent of the Anfal campaign, where collective punishment tactics and rhetoric were also implemented. Both episodes display the same Ba'athist logic of power, and their willingness to wield violence as a tool of homogenization.

Ba'athist ideology sought a unitary, Arab, loyalist, Sunni-dominated Iraqi identity. Any group, whether ethnic, sectarian, tribal, or political, posing an alternative source of identity was treated as a threat to homogenization. Such violence was made manifest in varying degrees, ranging from campaigns of mass death to targeted executions, to state propaganda campaigns encouraging unified solidarity, to the destruction of cultural artifacts of minority communities. Collective punishment was implemented consistently as state policy, as seen in the Anfal campaign, the 1991 uprising, and the targeting of the Iraqi Jewish community because of their diplomatic relations with Israel. In these cases, violence was not merely surgical or targeted; it was categorical, aiming at reshaping whole community identities. The regime saw itself as the embodiment of national identity; opposition was treason, and treason justified eradication. Kurdish and Shia communities were labeled as collaborators with Iran, just as the Jewish communities were labeled collaborators with Israel. Makiya's theory of the Iraqi state being structured to impose homogenization of all levels of society through fear tactics and violence is glaringly clear through the examination of Ba'athist Iraq's history. The Anfal campaign fits snugly within the Iraqi regime's policies toward minorities, striving for its overarching goal of eliminating diversity and consolidating power through violence. The aftermath of such violence demonstrates the persistent reach of Ba'athist authoritarian policies, long after its subsequent destruction.

The Anfal campaign was a devastating and violent expression of the extremes the Iraqi Ba'athist state under Saddam Hussein was willing to go to consolidate power. The aftermaths of genocides such as these tend to be underdeveloped in scholarly scrutiny compared to the actual events themselves. However, as important as it is to understand that the Anfal campaign did not emerge out of a vacuum, it is equally important to acknowledge that the effects of such a mass atrocity trickled down for decades. Survivors live on with scars, both physical and mental. Community dynamics are reshaped to accommodate the drastic changes during the violence. Collective sentiments about the events and sense of identity also continue to develop with an intensity that may not have been present before.

One of the more immediate challenges after the Anfal campaign concluded in September of 1988 was to reintegrate the displaced populations. Many thousands were internally displaced within Iraq, with many tens of thousands more living in refugee camps within Turkey or Iran.⁶⁶ For many, it took several years before they trusted that they would be able to return to Iraq without being killed. Many simply stayed in the countries they had fled to and attempted to make new lives there. Life after the Anfal was especially hard for Kurdish women, many of whom were shoved into new social status as a result of their husbands or fathers being killed. Grappling with this change of status as the household breadwinners despite their limited education and transferable job skills, many Kurdish families sunk deeper into poverty.⁶⁷ Following the demilitarization of the Northern Iraqi region after 1991, many Kurds returned to old villages and attempted to rebuild their lives through their familiar past time, namely agriculture. This was not successful. The absence of men, lack of farm machinery, and lack of support from the Kurdistan Regional Government contributed to this failure.⁶⁸

Violent events such as the Anfal campaign have an impact on the victims for the rest of their lives. Those who survived gas attacks were and are suffering from delayed effects.⁶⁹ Long term effects of mustard gas include chronic lung disease and bronchitis, permanent impaired vision, cancer, infertility, and congenital malformations of fetuses. A study analyzing the long-term health problems of Halabja ten years after it was gassed showed that the risk of developing cancers or other gas-related disorders was three to four times more common when compared to unexposed populations. The high rates of sterility and cancer were found to be comparable to those of the atomic bomb survivors in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.⁷⁰ Many survivors of the Anfal also developed severe mental disorders. Prolonged exposure to violence, stress, and uncertainty caused there to be a rupture of emotional and psychological security among many Kurdish survivors.⁷¹ Survivors of atrocities such as this often have to deal with a lifetime of physical or psychological issues, grappling with the trauma that they were exposed to.

The Anfal campaign also contributed heavily to a revival of nationalism among Iraqi Kurds. The anti-Kurdish violence had been largely ignored by other Arab leaders in the region, who felt they must stand tall with Saddam during his war with Iran. Feeling betrayed by the Arab world, Iraqi Kurds renewed their desire for autonomy and began to prioritize their national and ethnic identity over their religious one, seeing as the promise of Islamic brotherhood had been abandoned during their time of need. In the post-1991 education system, many young Iraqi Kurds refused to learn Arabic out of principle.⁷² As recently as 2017, there was a referendum for independence put on the table in Northern Iraq. Seventy-two percent of those able to vote did, equaling about 3.3 million people. Ninety-two percent of those votes were in favor of secession and independence.⁷³ The Iraqi government denied it. Still, to this day, there is a fierce devotion among Iraqi Kurds regarding their sense of identity. Iraqi Kurds have paid for it in the past with their blood. But unfairly distributed violence only strengthens convictions.

In March of 2003, the United States launched Operation Iraqi Freedom, aiming to oust the Ba'athist regime due to claims of weapons of mass destruction. By August, Ali Hassan al-Majid was captured by US forces. In December of the same year, Saddam Hussein was also captured. Iraq was eager to deliver justice, and several high court tribunal cases were promptly arranged to convict the former Ba'athist leaders of their crimes. One of these tribunals was centered around the Anfal events, alleging that the operation amounted to genocide as well as violating several other human rights.

Seven men were put to the stand in August 2006: Saddam Hussein, Ali Hassan al-Majid, Sultan Hashim Ahmad al-Tai, Hussein Rashid al-Tikriti, Sabir Abd al-Aziz al-Douri, Farhan Mutlak al-Jubouri, and Tahir Tawfiq al-Aani. Before the culmination of this trial, Saddam Hussein was found guilty of crimes against humanity in a

separate case, the Dujail trial. Saddam had been the victim of an assassination attempt in 1982 within the town of Dujail, where he reacted by detaining nearly 800 men, women, and children, torturing them until he received information on the culprits.⁷⁴ Approximately 148 of those male detainees were later tried and killed on grounds of treason.⁷⁵ For his role in these crimes, Saddam Hussein was found guilty on November 5, 2006. He was executed by hanging on December 30. For this reason, Saddam Hussein did not complete his trial relating to his part in the horrors of the Anfal, although he did receive a vengeful justice in the end. If he were to have his punishment delayed to stand trial for every series of crimes he committed, he would still be alive today. Ali Hassan al-Majid however, was sentenced for his part in the Kurdish killings.

On June 24, 2007, “Chemical Ali” was found guilty by the Iraqi High Tribunal of being guilty of genocide, along with a string of other human rights violations. His actions were found to amount to the legal definition of genocide, namely, aiming to eradicate in whole or in part the Iraqi Kurdish population.⁷⁶ He was deemed to be the ultimate authority of the region during the operation, on par even with Saddam’s level of influence. Ali Hassan al-Majid had under his command the state’s civil, military, security, and Party systems.⁷⁷ His direct orders included: killing and preventing any human, animal or agronomic existence, as well as industrial and agricultural investments, putting an end to anyone arrested within the prohibited zone whose age range is between 15 (included) and 70 years old (included), instructing military troops to prepare special attacks, day and night, to murder the biggest possible number of those residing the area...⁷⁸ Such orders clearly demonstrate the belief in the total destruction of a population that animated the Anfal campaign. Despite this, no major international court system to this day has acknowledged the events as being a genocide. Yet, in January of 2010, al-Majid was executed by hanging within Camp Justice, the same facility his cousin Saddam was executed in.

The Anfal campaign stands as a clear expression of Saddam Hussein’s broader goal to homogenize Iraq through coercion and violence. Ethnic and religious diversity within Ba’athist Iraq aimed to fracture the unified ideal the state strove for. Cultural and ethnic identity itself became a threat to the government if it stood contrary to the uniformity the nation demanded. By situating the Anfal campaign within this ideological and political context, it becomes evident that the atrocities carried out between 1987 and 1989 were not isolated from wartime excesses or merely counterinsurgency operations. Instead, the Anfal campaign was the violent fantasy of the state lived out, seeking to homogenize one of Iraq’s more distinct populations through coercion, removal, and systematic destruction.

The collective punishment of the Kurdish population, cloaked within the rhetoric of counterinsurgency operations, is important to recognize as an instance of genocide. Saddam Hussein and Ali Hassan stood at the helm of a campaign that committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, the Iraqi Kurdish population based on their ethno-nationalist identity, a clear fulfillment of the UN definition of genocide.⁷⁹ Ba’athist leaders several times voiced explicit arguments for the eradication of the Kurdish people as a whole, not merely the insurgents. Even if there were no such explicit statements, one could infer from the many instances of collective punishment that genocidal intent was there despite a state narrative that they were merely combating militants. Ultimately, understanding the Anfal campaign as part of Saddam Hussein’s broader policies toward minorities allows us to see it not simply as an episode of wartime brutality, but as a deliberate attempt to eliminate ethnic diversity in northern Iraq. Recognizing this continuity is essential for interpreting how authoritarian regimes weaponize identity categories, manipulate security discourses, and deploy state capacity to remake social landscapes. The Anfal campaign is thus a case study in the power of the modern state to transform ideology into violence.

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LOOTING THE FATHERLAND: STRATEGIC ATROCITIES IN GERMANY, 1940-1949

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Abstract: Through Allied bombing campaigns, this article argues that Germany was strategically destroyed in World War II to create a state of dependency on American and European economies. Western Europe's indefinite occupation by the American military is also argued to be a form of imperialism, rather than protection from an aggressive Soviet Union. Poland, Czechoslovakia, and the Soviet Union simultaneously expelled millions of Germans from Eastern Europe, confiscated German industrial equipment to modernize their states, and knowingly stunted Germany's postwar recovery. Existing research on this subject reveals the war's devastation to European populations, economies, and the end of a historically militant Germany. However, using scholarly works from the most respected historians of twentieth-century European history and a variety of declassified intelligence reports, this article demonstrates how Allies in the West and East utilized the Second World War to modernize their economies at the expense of the German nation and civilian population.

After the Second World War, America and the Soviet Union emerged as the new leading global empires, as the Western European empires collapsed due to the devastation of the war. Financing the reconstruction of several European nations allowed America to surpass its European cousins following the end of the war. The Soviet Union, despite losing tens of millions of people in a war of attrition with the Germans, emerged from the war as the superior power in Central and Eastern Europe. These two nations could not have taken control of world trade from European empires, like Great Britain, France, and Germany, if not for the destruction inflicted on Western Europe by the devastating Second World War. Allies committed atrocities against the German civilian population, harvested valuable resources from Germany to enrich their own empires, and used the postwar occupation of Central and Eastern Europe to establish a new imperial order built on the extraction of German resources and labor.

One of this paper's main arguments is that there were alternate motives for the military decisions of the Western Allies during the Second World War, and that the ruthless bombing campaigns against the German population centers served a larger goal. This alternative motive was to eliminate any possibility of the German economy resurrecting independently, as it had previously done following the First World War. By destroying nearly all urban centers, the Allies permanently removed any foundation for German independence following World War II. Millions of homeless Germans starved, which contributed to their dependence on primarily American financial aid for economic reconstruction, as well as military protection against a possible Soviet invasion. These emergent issues following the war guaranteed American presence in Europe to complete their agenda, the construction of a European continent dependent on American financial investment, industry, and protection.

Western bombing campaigns also obliterated the *Altstädte*, or old towns, which were German cultural centers within German cities that developed over a millennium and were the foundation of Germanic civilization.¹ Most of the old towns in Germany went up in flames alongside the manufacturing base, and the machinery that was not bombed was shipped to Allied nations as 'reparations' for the war. With no military, no agricultural surplus, and its cultural centers destroyed, Germany was reduced to an economic zone that came under the protection of the armies of the American-led Western Allies and became dependent on Western economies. The Allies either reduced to rubble or confiscated the entirety of German industrial capability, which crippled its economic independence, thereby forcing the German people to rely heavily on American financial assistance as well as French manufactured goods to rebuild the heart of European industrial engineering.

After presenting the motives for the actions of the Western Allies, this paper shifts to the East to examine the decisions made by the Soviets regarding the occupation of East Germany between 1945, the year the Soviets permanently advanced onto German soil, and 1949, when the worst conditions of Soviet occupation subsided. As Russian troops marched into German East Prussia in 1945, Soviet troops violently assaulted and ethnically cleansed Germans, as well as pillaged entire towns inhabited by ethnic Germans who had resided there for centuries. The Red Army on the Belorussian Front adamantly echoed the orders of Marshal Georgy Zhukov to get their "terrible revenge for everything."² This terror inflicted on German civilians by Soviet forces did not end after the

war; in fact, it only evolved with broader consequences following the Potsdam Conference in 1945, which “legally” organized the “ethnic cleansing,” or the systematic expulsion, of ethnic Germans from Central and Eastern Europe.³

Occupying East Germany provided the underdeveloped Soviet Union with a unique opportunity for the process of rapid industrialization and to economically and militarily compete with the Western European world. This opportunity for the Soviets also produced another method to further inflict atrocities on Germans in the process. Much of East Germany was deindustrialized by the Soviets, and factories full of advanced German machinery were exported to Russia. The Soviet goal of industrialization in the Russian interior was also accomplished through forced German labor by the hundreds of thousands. The effects of widespread deindustrialization on Germans in the Russian Zone were catastrophic and led to their dependence on the Soviet economy for sustenance.

Poland and Czechoslovakia, two countries under Soviet influence, were also motivated by potential state expansion through their own process of ‘de-Germanization.’ Under the agreement at Potsdam, the Allies agreed to redraw the borders and cede German lands to the Poles and the new Czech state, and the ethnic Germans in the East were to be relocated within the new German borders.⁴ The Polish and Czech governments, therefore, immediately engaged in the erasure of both the cultural centers and the population of ethnic Germans within the new borders of Poland and Czechoslovakia. Through pillage, Soviet-backed relocations, and nationalist-driven expulsions, approximately twelve million German civilians had been expelled from Central and Eastern Europe, with over five million being from the ‘Recovered Territories,’ or confiscated German lands, alone.⁵

This paper draws on a broad range of primary and secondary sources to document the full extent of the Allies’ postwar atrocities. Through the Freedom of Information Act, previously classified intelligence reports from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) have entered the public space in recent years, which provide much of the evidence of the postwar actions of the Allies in this paper. Declassified intelligence reports from both Russian and British archives contribute to the bulk of the evidence in this paper as well. Supporting these declassified intelligence reports are scholarly works produced by the most credible historians in the field of twentieth-century ethnic cleansing. Scholarly works by Harvard-published author Norman Naimark, Yale-published author R.M. Douglas, human rights activist Alfred Maurice de Zayas, and several European historians are some of the many sources used to reinforce the argument of this paper.

American and French motives in the Western zones of occupation are central to this paper because these two powers play the most important roles in securing international trade in continental Europe, as well as incorporating West Germany into the folds of American-led reconstruction and creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Ultimately, Britain, collapsing under an economic crisis while simultaneously losing its global empire to independence movements, played a minor role in the reconstruction of Europe. As Britain mainly provides passive assistance to the agenda presented by the United States, it is appropriate not to include Britain in this research since it was preoccupied with domestic affairs. In the East, this paper covers three main states, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and the Soviet Union, which conducted ethnic cleansing of Germans, alongside their confiscation of German industry and a wide range of resources to modernize their own economies. This paper demonstrates how each significant member of the Allies, in both the West and the East, played their roles in reconstructing Europe for the benefit of their own people, and how ethnic German communities paid the price through deindustrialization, death, expulsion, and suffering.

With the Unification of Germany in 1871, the power in Central Europe shifted away from Russia and France to the new German Empire. The united Germanic people had created new threats through their economy and military, which then threatened the world order that had been created by France, Great Britain, and Russia. This threat exploded into four years of total war. The Treaty of Versailles, ratified in 1919, attempted to permanently strip Germany of all ability to challenge the imperial powers of the West, and, most importantly, to prevent Germany from rivaling the economic empire of London. Ironically, this treaty served as the powder keg for the Second World War. World War II began when Hitler’s Germany declared war against Poland on September 1, 1939, with the British and French empires declaring war against Germany shortly after. Nearly two years later, Germany launched a surprise offensive into the Soviet Union, thereby starting a war of attrition that resulted in the death of millions of civilians and military combatants.

The Allies engaged in total war against Germany, expending their resources and their manpower during their retaliatory attacks to defeat Germany. Great Britain prepared for the deadly six-year war with Germany and fully accepted that bombing civilians to neutralize the German war economy was worth the risk.⁶ Following the rapid collapse of French defenses and the infamous London Blitz, Great Britain inflicted its own carpet bombing of the industrial and cultural centers of West Germany. By partnering with the Americans at the beginning of 1942, the Western Allies laid waste to nearly all the major urban centers of Germany, to the extent that even Churchill questioned the long-term effects of such a devastating war strategy.⁷ These urban centers, alongside the *Altstädte* constructed over the course of a millennium, were reduced to rubble by the end of the war. Cities like Bremen, founded by King Charlemagne during his Saxon Wars for Christian rule over Western Europe, were largely incinerated.⁸ The total deaths caused by Allied area bombing of the largest German cities are estimated at around 500,000, or nearly two percent of the urban population, with many more left homeless and without food.⁹ Roughly 20 percent of “dwelling units” in Germany were also leveled.¹⁰ At the end of the war in Europe in 1945, the remaining manufacturing sectors of West Germany were looted and labeled as ‘reparations.’ The West German economy, in desperate need of financial investment to rebuild, was reduced to an economic zone for American companies to profit from American foreign policies like the European Recovery Act, which offered aid to Europe if European nations purchased from American industries.

On the Eastern Front, the Russians were far more brutal against the Germans, as they raped and pillaged German civilians mercilessly. Once Soviet forces pushed into German territory in 1945, they plundered German towns, expelled Germans from Eastern Europe, and transported hundreds of thousands of Germans into the Russian interior for hard labor as revenge for atrocities during the German offensive. Alongside these actions, the Soviet Union also deindustrialized East Germany directly as their method of ‘reparations,’ often forcing East Germans to deconstruct their own machinery and prepare it for transport. Under the shadow of the crimes of the German military during their occupation, the Soviets ruthlessly engineered their imperialist efforts to industrialize the Soviet interior at the economic expense of an already poverty-stricken East Germany.

The reestablished Czech and Polish governments mirrored the aggressive actions of the Russians in their reclaimed territories under similar opportunistic conditions. The Czech and Polish governments, in response to German nationalism, retaliated with their own calls for ethno-nationalist states. This rise of nationalism, in conjunction with nation-building approved at the Potsdam Conference after the war, led to the complete expulsion of the German people and their culture from East Prussia, the Sudetenland, and much of Silesia. Like the Soviet Union, the Czech and Polish authorities expelled German women and children, while simultaneously retaining German men for hard labor. The hard labor in the mines also resulted in many deaths in the camps through starvation and overall exhaustion. While many Germans were expelled, some Germans stayed, often at gunpoint, to teach their evictors how to operate the advanced German machinery in factories. These three nation-states took advantage of the war to increase their economic power and territorial gains at the expense of German civilians, who were removed from their ancestral homelands.

The damage to major German cities was significant, and by the end of the war, both industrial and residential areas lay in ruins. Historian Kevin Lowe argues that the damage to German cities, compared to the destruction in Britain by German bombing, was at least eighteen times worse. In his research at the Reich’s Statistical Office, Lowe demonstrated the devastation of several iconic German cities. Lowe stated that Berlin “lost up to 50 per cent of its habitable premises, Hanover 51.6 per cent, Hamburg 53.3 per cent, Duisburg 64 per cent, Dortmund 66 per cent, and Cologne 70 per cent.”¹¹ Civilian casualties, because of area bombing, also stacked up alongside the percentage of destruction, with an estimated death toll of 600,000 and over a million that were severely injured.¹² German civilians, left homeless and jobless, now depended on the aid of the Allies, meaning they relied on American financial assistance.

The American occupation of Western Europe was possible only if the European nations were unable to finance or defend themselves from a larger foe, and WWII provided the US with the perfect opening. America used the division of Germany and the reconstruction of the European economy as a pretext to continue its presence in continental Europe. American intelligence stated that one of its primary concerns about relinquishing control of

West Germany was that the country would immediately shift back into a nationalistic and authoritarian government if it could not mediate economic concerns or reunite with East Germany, which was under Soviet control.¹³ Because of this admission, American intelligence concluded that Germany needed to be economically dependent on a strong American economy to prevent an alignment with the Soviets. America sought to retain as much power over the German people as possible as it wagered whether relinquishing control of West Germany should come with conditions of neutrality and/or strong armament restrictions. America would not relinquish total control of the German provisional government until certain economic and military concessions were made in line with American postwar policy in Europe.

The Western Allies did not immediately accept Western Germany back into the fold of Europe. Up until early September of 1949, Western Allies still had almost 300,000 troops in the American-oriented Western zones, with nearly half under American leadership alone.¹⁴ Germany was dependent on America not just for regional control but also for military protection due to the Soviet troop buildup in Eastern Germany. No longer in a position to negotiate the terms of West Germany's recovery, Germany now had no choice but to adhere to the demands of America. Military occupation, combined with the unification of the British, French, and American occupation zones and the creation of NATO in 1949, allowed the American government to shift towards economic control of West Germany.

After the severe restrictions on West Germany were lifted, American intelligence agencies planned the future of Central Europe. The American goal was to neutralize Germany to prevent it from becoming a militant power and to structure a new German state that was dependent on Western aid. The creation of NATO, and its backing by America, provided military security for France, which in turn provided economic security for inter-trade between Western and Central Europe.¹⁵ The expansion of NATO was congruent with the foreign policy goals of America. Through the construction of a Western European Union, backed by American financial and military aid, this union guaranteed European markets for American capital investments as well as goods and services.¹⁶

The destruction caused by British and American bombing raids crippled the industrial capacity of Germany and left Europe with no markets to trade with other than America. Germany had a long history of being the industrial center of Europe, and the annihilation of its industries made its impact felt, especially in France and England. The war destroyed French, British, and German industrial centers. Europe, bankrupt and leveled by six years of intense war, was desperate for an economy to trade with, and America quickly fulfilled this role. Western Europe had no choice but to turn to America, a nation untouched by the war, for its new supplier of manufactured goods, thus turning America into an industrial powerhouse.¹⁷ Under the European Recovery Act, also known as the Marshall Plan, European nations were provided with \$13.3 billion in both American capital and materials to reconstruct their economies.¹⁸ America was guaranteed markets for its burgeoning industrial base, and the economic stability established by the Marshall Plan ensured American power in Western Europe flourished.

Immediately following the war, France was determined to permanently eliminate the possibility of being threatened by another strong German state. CIA documents reveal that American intelligence closely monitored French postwar ambitions to ensure they aligned with imperialist ambitions of the American federal government. The French government demanded that German authoritarian militarism never be allowed again in Central Europe. This demand was to be fulfilled politically, through the decentralization of Germany, as well as installing a complex democratic federal government, which ultimately turned Germany into a decentralized state akin to a "pre-Bismarckian" Germany.¹⁹ Furthermore, while molding the German government into a more favorable system to Western Europe, France demanded control of the German economy. Simultaneously, the French government penalized Germany with harsh policies, which prioritized exhausting already scarce resources in the French zone of occupation at the expense of the economic recovery of West Germany.²⁰

Control of the trade in Central Europe was another strategic goal of war-torn France, which conflicted directly with American goals. France relied heavily on German markets for its manufacturing base to survive, and the French government used the German demand for wheat and other foods to accomplish this goal.²¹ France also imported massive amounts of coal from Germany to power the French economic reconstruction. France continued

the expansion of its dominance in trade with Germany, as Germany served as the gateway to trade with Eastern Europe. France used trade with both Germany and the Soviet Union to fund their reconfiguration of imperial holdings in North Africa.²² American leaders in Washington recognized that their agenda was jeopardized by France because it prevented total American control of East-West trade relations. What America viewed as a security risk, France reopened trade with the Soviet Union because the French government viewed trade with the East as an opportunity to hasten its economic reconstruction. While France deliberately pursued a foreign policy that conflicted with American efforts to dominate the European continent, the French government also constructed the German economy around France at home.

The French government devoted significantly fewer resources to rebuilding the French-occupied zone in Western Germany. Instead, the French government structured the economic sectors within the French Zone around the French economy. This economic model was designed to guarantee a market for French industries, as over half of the exports from the zone had been sent to France.²³ France depended on raw materials like timber, as well as German markets, for its economic reconstruction, and in some cases, "certain plants worked exclusively for the so-called export program and were accorded preferential treatment in the supply of power, coal, and raw materials as well as in the allocation of cigarettes and food."²⁴ Specific industries in Germany that favored French material demands for its reconstruction received preferential treatment over others through a form of bribery by using the necessities of survival. The German industrial might within the French zone of occupation, in the span of two years after the war, turned from an independent and complex system of manufacturing into a controlled economy that served at the behest of the reconstruction of the French economy.

Before World War II, Germany was the industrial powerhouse that other European powers depended on for strategic resources, giving them a significant advantage during wartime. After the war, however, France was determined to prevent Germany from ever acquiring an industrial advantage of such magnitude over France again.²⁵ France's hostility is demonstrated by its extreme favorableness to the Western Allied occupation of the Ruhr area. The primary economic goal of France was to heavily regulate the German Ruhr coal production so it was not possible to compete with French industries, and instead, the Ruhr would be subordinate to France.²⁶ To accomplish an economic maneuver over occupied Germany, France was forced to negotiate with the United States in 1947 during the discussions of merging the Western occupation zones of the United States, the United Kingdom, and France.

The American-led Anglo-American Bizone forced France into intense negotiations to combine its German zone of occupation with the Bizone of the United States and Britain, which had amalgamated in 1946, the year prior. France understood that neutralizing German aggression towards France, while having German markets open to the fragile French economy, meant France needed certain securities. These securities could be ensured by the United States through military occupation, as well as capital investment from American investments. According to the CIA, America proposed a plan in which "a US military commitment in Europe, by allaying the fundamental French fear that France may again be left alone in Europe to face a resurgent Germany, would have a considerable effect in obtaining French concessions on fundamental economic issues."²⁷ Washington laid out a plan that quelled the fears of France in exchange for a military presence and assuming a key role in the construction of a new Western European Union.

Ethnic Germans in Eastern Europe were impacted far harder than the Western Allied zone because of the claims of reparations within the Eastern nation-states. The Soviet occupation of East Germany and a section of Austria is commonly referred to as the 'Russian Zone,' and the Soviets occupied the economy in this zone.²⁸ The Soviet Union arranged its occupation of Germany to allow communism to flourish throughout East Germany and to firmly control its industrial capabilities.²⁹ This control was for two primary reasons. The first reason was to secure market demand in Russia for manufactured goods related to the industrializing Russian economy. The second reason was the extraction of as much industrial machinery from East Germany and Austria as possible, as these regions were some of the most heavily industrialized areas in Europe. The Russians then collected manufactured goods, as well as machinery, as official reparations from the Russian Zone in accordance with the Potsdam Agreement in 1945, following the end of World War II.

The West closely monitored railway activity between the Russian Zone and the Soviet interior to determine whether the Soviets abided by the Potsdam Agreement. What was immediately clear about the Soviet occupation in the East was that they were ruthless in their practices in confiscating German machinery to the detriment of the German economy. The CIA discovered that in the Spring of 1945, before the war had concluded, the Soviets began their policy of deindustrialization in the German state of Austria.³⁰ American intelligence determined that the widespread policy of deindustrialization remained the same throughout the Russian Zone in the 1940s and often ignored the agreed reparation amounts that Germany needed to provide the Soviet Union. Violation of the Potsdam Agreement was evident in the Frankfurt der Oder region of East Germany.

As Russia deindustrialized its zone of occupation immediately after the defeat of Germany, the Soviets transported much of this equipment into the inner regions of the Soviet Union, like Siberia, to be reassembled by Polish engineers. Engineers arrived in Nikolayevsk and Petropavlovsk to install machinery from German shipbuilding factories. Specifically, the Soviets transported German machinery for the reassembly of a synthetic gasoline plant to other areas, such as Yakutia, with the assistance of several thousand German prisoners who were simultaneously transported there.³¹ Austria, an ethnic German state, bore much of the brunt of the reparations alongside Germany, as the Soviets occupied Vienna and parts of Burgenland. The demand for reparations in the latter half of the 1940s showed no signs of slowing down.

Russian troops regularly administered train schedules and documented their holdings. American intelligence obtained the manifest documents of rail yards of the Russian Zone in 1949, and their declassified documents reveal the extent of Russian integration of German territory. The full railcars of manufactured goods and reparations revealed two discoveries to the West. The first discovery was how heavily dependent the Russians were on German markets, and the second was how many materials the Russians extracted from the Russian Zone. The CIA noted that for nine days in April of 1949, eighty-three trains traveled east from Frankfurt an der (Oder) to Brest-Litovsk, filled with gasoline.³² Within these rail cars, 1,664 carried "reparation goods," 225 carried "Soviet army equipment," 570 carried "Industrial goods and coal," 570 carried "Industrial goods," 324 carried tractors, 270 carried iron and steel, and 35 carried gasoline. Dozens of trains carried materials from East Germany to industrialize the Russian interior, while Germans in the Russian Zone were left with little to rebuild their economy.

Evidence uncovered by American intelligence agencies in the second half of the 1940s suggests that the Soviet Union was removing much more than the originally agreed-upon amount of German machinery for reparations. Judging by the sudden orders in 1948 from Marshal Sokolovsky's Deputy for Economic Affairs, Ivan Y. Koval, there were complex efforts to conceal the official number of reparations from Germany. According to the Central Intelligence Agency, roughly 870 German factories were affected by these orders, and these factories were mandated to create secret police systems to enforce the secrecy orders.³³ Russia purposefully crafted a security system to hide the amount of sophisticated German machinery and raw materials. This concealment was a constant and significant effort, as the CIA recognized that throughout the initial years of occupation, there were numerous reports of "heavy movement of empty railway cars to the Dresden area to evacuate dismantled material and industrial products."³⁴ Soviet motives in the Russian Zone stemmed from the desire to industrialize Russia at the expense of the German economy and the welfare of the people whom the Soviets claimed to be saving.

During their dismantlement of German industrial equipment, Russia fractured the delicate system of industry constructed during the leadership of Hitler. The industrial sectors of Germany relied on each other because of the lack of resources, and their industrial responsibilities were uniquely connected to work both efficiently and cost-effectively with neighboring factories. Because of the immediate and sporadic dismantlement of German industrial plants by the Soviets, the German economy faced economic hardship without essential equipment. According to American historian Norman Naimark, in the fall of 1945, Soviet deindustrialization teams descended upon Eastern Germany without rules barring them from confiscation of machinery critical to the reconstruction of the German economy. Soviet troops routinely beat German workers and forced them to watch machinery that could have rebuilt Germany be dismantled, only to sit out on the railroads in the elements and rust away.³⁵ The Soviets exacerbated the economic conditions that the Western Allies had begun with area bombing.

German industrial hubs had been bombed out by the Western Allies and created long-term issues for the reconstruction of the German economy in both Eastern and Western zones. This economic hardship was especially true in Berlin, where “between 1940 and 1945 the British RAF dropped more than 60,000 tons of bombs on Berlin, killing 200,000 people and destroying up to 75 percent of buildings in the center of the city.”³⁶ The city, already devastated by constant carpet bombing from the Western Allies, faced Soviet retribution from the East. Soviet troops worsened the already-fragile economic stability with their occupation and their subsequent demand for reparations following the carnage. After the city was almost entirely leveled, the Soviet offensive, which ended the war, brought another wave of death and destruction. When the artillery stopped and the dust settled, out of the 500,000 German casualties, 125,000 were civilians, and another 500,000 were taken as prisoners by the Soviets.³⁷ Civilian casualties are not the only sufficient unit of measurement to understand the amount of loss in Berlin.

After capturing Berlin, the Russians quickly exported major German high-tech companies, like Osram and Borsig, before the Western Allies settled into Berlin. The Russians deindustrialized Berlin with great haste because it was one of the most industrialized regions in Europe. British historian Giles MacDonogh argues that the deindustrialization of Berlin was so quick that “by the autumn of 1945 they had already dismantled 4,339 of the 17,024 major installations.”³⁸ The deindustrialization process itself was violent in nature. John F. Kennedy wrote in his personal diary about how his experience in Berlin in mid-July of 1945 was negatively colored by the Russian presence. He explained that while the Russians were opening schools and allowing only left-wing political parties to resume activity, “stripping factories and raping women” alienated even the communist Germans in Berlin because of the severe recklessness of the Soviets.³⁹ Also, German poet Bertolt Brecht wrote in his personal journal entry of October 23, 1948, “the panic caused by the plundering and after the rape, that followed the taking of Berlin, in the workers’ quarters the people had awaited the liberator with desperate joy, arms were outstretched, but the encounter became an attack.”⁴⁰ Soviet forces constantly attacked civilians and plundered city centers in East Germany throughout the second half of the 1940s. While German machinery was the top priority of the Russians, it was not the only commodity that was shipped from Germany.

The Russians abducted Germans not physically impaired from the war and transported them, alongside their machinery, to Russia. According to Lavrentiy Beria, the head of the Soviet secret police during WWII, the brutal treatment of German civilians by Soviet forces before the end of the war already alarmed authorities, as many Soviets raped and pillaged the German communities.⁴¹ As another form of reparations, the Soviets shipped these Germans to industrialize the Soviet Union. Germans forced into Russian labor camps suffered horrible living and working conditions. Of the 874,000 ethnic Germans sent to the Russian camps, almost half of them died, according to documents from the German Red Cross.⁴² Even worse, the Russians imported much of the German machinery in vain because the factories in East Germany were constructed to supply other factories nearby. The Soviets had no use for most of the machinery because they required the entire sector from which they sporadically confiscated machinery.⁴³ This flaw affected the Soviet and German economies because the machinery was not usable in either state without the entire sector alongside it. This costly mistake was among the primary reasons why the Soviets switched their reparations policy to one that was geared towards restructuring German industries in the Russian Zone into an economy that supplied the Soviet Union with manufactured goods directly, rather than importing entire systems across the continental divide.

The postwar expulsion of the *Sudetendeutsch*, also known as the ethnic Germans from their ancestral homelands in the Sudetenland, was a violent and costly process. The German expulsion, both ‘wild’ and ‘organized,’ led to many deaths and considerable suffering, as Czechoslovak authorities redistributed both German land and property through a process of removing German civilians by any means necessary. Even anti-German officials from Britain and Czechoslovakia could not stomach what they witnessed during the expulsion of the *Sudetendeutsch*. Colonel Harold Perkins, “a Czech-speaking British intelligence officer and no Germanophile, was nonetheless appalled by the scenes of violence he witnessed in Prague” during the organized, or so-called ‘civilized’ expulsions.⁴⁴ Former pro-Czechoslovak figures, like *Manchester Guardian* journalist Frederick Augustus Voigt, had written about the vicious behavior in which the Slavs were expelling the German population from the Sudetenland in what he called “a racial doctrine akin to Hitler’s.”⁴⁵

In pursuit of a new Slavic nationalist state, violent expulsions of Germans from the Sudetenland began shortly after the defeat of Germany. Czechoslovak authorities ordered Germans to grab as much of their belongings as they could within an hour and ordered them to march to the Allied-occupied zones, often without food or water.⁴⁶ Czechoslovakia became very aggressive in the enforcement of a new Slavic state, which mandated that all traces of German culture be erased. There was no doubt that the “flexibility at the margins of nationality did not mean that the Czechs would tolerate any continuity of ‘Germanness’ in the reconstructed republic.”⁴⁷ Czechoslovakian authorities went to great lengths to eradicate German culture and its presence in Bohemia. An estimated three million *Sudetendeutsch* were expelled from the Sudetenland and relocated to the Allied-occupied zones, with tens of thousands losing their lives in the process.⁴⁸ Not until the early 1950s did the Slavic state consider the remaining *Sudetendeutsch* to be ‘tolerable.’ The communist-occupied Czechoslovakian government issued a memo in 1951, which signaled to the nation that the saying the phrase “a good German - a dead German” was no longer acceptable.⁴⁹ Germans, expelled for nationalistic and economic reasons, also hastily fled for left-leaning political reasons.

Socialist and communist politicians in the reinstated Czech government recognized the opportunity within the early days of the German defeat, starvation. Communist activists like Josef Kapoun organized locals to pressure the government into expelling Germans, a process that subjected hundreds of German civilians to forced marches and detention conditions where disease and starvation proved fatal.⁵⁰ Politicians also looked to exacerbate tensions for their own gain within higher office. The left-leaning politicians in Czechoslovakia used the anger against the Germans to “build and consolidate power through popular approval,” among the people of the new Slavic nation through encouragement of widespread expulsion of the *Sudetendeutsch* from lands their ancestors had lived on for centuries.⁵¹ The Social Democrats and communists within the Czech government quickly enacted their own agenda over the Germans in the Sudetenland under the cover of war and the chaos that followed the Allied victory over the Germans.

Left-leaning parties in Czechoslovakia also recognized that the seizure of German businesses generated popularity for their parties, as their constituents favorably viewed the distribution of German wealth to the Slavic people of Czechoslovakia. According to David W. Gerlach, “by the end of 1946 nearly 3,000 individual factories had been nationalized in the Bohemian lands,” with most of these advanced factories being German-run.⁵² Czech authorities secured German industries through the erasure of German rights in the state to own property or even be citizens. While the Sudetenland had been cleansed of Germans, and their business was now in the hands of the state, the problem of labor quickly became an issue. However, there was an exception for certain industrialist Germans, who were retained to benefit from their expertise in advanced machinery.

While expelling the *Sudetendeutsch* from Bohemia, a state within the Sudetenland region, the new government in Prague also targeted advanced German industrialists to help modernize the Czechoslovakian nation. Czech officials understood that expelling skilled Germans only hurt the new Czechoslovakian state, as the *Sudetendeutsch* often owned the competitive industries. To eliminate outside competition and promote domestic production, the best method was to retain as many skilled German workers as possible. Without these Germans, the Czech government knew its postwar economy risked total failure. Factory managers kept over 100,000 specialists within German-owned companies specifically because, without German expertise, the industries in Bohemia faced collapse, which would lead to the failure of Czech industrialization.⁵³

The only method to guarantee the retention of desirable Germans to train Czechoslovakians was to force them to stay. The Czechoslovak authorities prevented skilled and unskilled, able-bodied men from being expelled, and “according to U.S. estimates, this was happening in up to a third of all cases” of German men being illegally separated from their families for labor quotas.⁵⁴ The Czech government sent many *Sudetendeutsch* to do hard labor in mining camps and forced the families of these men to be expelled into the Western-Allied and Soviet zones of occupation. Only after 1946 did expulsions cease because the new Czech state was critically short on labor, and Czech authorities determined that the remainder of German men needed to be retained.

German expulsion from Silesia and Pomerania, or regions within East Prussia, occurred because the Poles demanded an ethnically homogenous nation-state. This demand was both diplomatically and financially possible

following the Second World War. According to European historian Norman Naimark, this expulsion of Germans from their lands was planned shortly after Poland fell to Germany in 1939.⁵⁵ Immediately after the war, the new Polish government began a process of ethnically cleansing Germans from both Silesia and Pomerania. The demand for a 'pure' Poland by the previously exiled Polish government was the primary factor for the ethnic cleansing of Germans. After the Potsdam Conference in the summer of 1945, Poland was reinstated as a state and acquired the 'Recovered Territories' of East Prussia. With these new lands ceded by Germany, postwar Poland's territorial claims were grounded in the historical lands the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth had governed roughly 600 years prior, cementing a 'blood and soil' narrative for the Poles.⁵⁶

The ferocity of the Poles against German civilians was staggering. Before the war ended, Soviet intelligence reported that tensions between ethnic Germans and Poles had become so violent that many German civilians decided to move to the U.S.S.R. from Poland following the destruction of their homelands.⁵⁷ Polish authorities left Germans residing in East Prussia under Polish control following the German defeat to die through starvation. The Polish government believed Poland had no obligation to feed or assist ethnic Germans, and when the Poles did assist by giving food, they only provided a third of the calories necessary.⁵⁸ The actions against the ethnic Germans by the Poles after the war only worsened.

The violence against Germans, motivated primarily by previous German actions against Polish people when Germany occupied Poland, severely worsened after the war because the Polish government then had free rein over twelve million unarmed German civilians. According to R.M. Douglas, Polish mobs stormed every building to find vulnerable Germans to kill and harass, even in the most vulnerable locations like hospitals.⁵⁹ Ethnic Germans, trapped under the iron fist of the new Polish nation, experienced a perpetual state of violence against them. Germans who attempted to apply for emigration to the redrawn territories of postwar Germany were "beaten and robbed, and only mass transports of old 'unproductive' people and children were permitted to leave."⁶⁰ The unproductive German population was then hastily funneled into the Allied zones of occupation. The next five years of mass German expulsion, Norman Naimark argues, resulted in "probably half a million [dead] as a direct result of the deportations; in all likelihood, at least twice that many lost their lives during this period as the result of the ethnic cleansing of Poland."⁶¹ Within the chaos of the forced German exodus from the reinstated Polish state, Polish authorities quickly pivoted to building their economy with the assistance of labor camps filled with Germans whom the Poles did not expel.

By 1946, the new Poland was in the process of industrializing itself with German labor. Poland conducted its violent plan of industrialization in secret as the Western European powers focused on rebuilding themselves. Under the cover of German defeat, the Polish government began "taking the opportunity to rid themselves of the unproductive element of the German population, retaining employable males for compulsory labor."⁶² The Polish government prevented able-bodied Germans from leaving, and for the next five years, forced over 100,000 Germans to work in labor camps. These camps, coinciding with atrocious working conditions, frequently suffered food shortages, disease outbreaks, and lethal levels of hard labor.⁶³ Even as relationships improved between the remaining Germans and the Polish government as the years progressed, Poles still did not trust or respect ethnic Germans. In the late 1940s, the Polish government recruited Germans in East Prussia through the military and "sent them to coal mines or some other industry for manual labor after basic training."⁶⁴ Poles made it clear that ethnic Germans were not accepted as equals in postwar Poland.

The Poles also envisioned their redrawn state to become an industrial force in Central and Eastern Europe. The easiest method to accomplish this was to confiscate German factories. By the beginning of 1946, Poland enacted a decree in which it "nationalized all factories of 50 or more workers as well as some smaller key firms."⁶⁵ German companies, like those in the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia, played a central role in the industrial reconstruction of Poland. The Polish government nearly quadrupled the steel output of the country in large part because of the acquisition of several major German steel plants in the 'Recovered Territories.'⁶⁶ Manufactured goods were not the only significant benefit of acquiring German territory. Not only were there massive raw material deposits in the 'Recovered Territories,' but there were also significant chemical plants and industries in construction materials, which were some of the most crucial factors of Polish reconstruction. The chemical plants, central to advanced

industrial manufacturing, paired with doubling the industrial capacity for producing cement, brick, and roofing tiles, provided Poland with the materials needed to rebuild the entire nation.⁶⁷ The rapid reconstruction of Poland after the war could not have been as nearly as successful and in such a relatively short amount of time without the confiscation of the 'western territories' from East Germany.

The Polish government also used the cover of German defeat to further its nationalistic goals. Ethnic German historian Harald Jähner demonstrated that Poland expelled not only Germans but Jews as well. Jewish people who survived the Nazi terror campaign in Poland immediately faced violent persecution from the new Polish state as well. Poland also forced over 100,000 Jewish people who lived in Poland to relocate alongside Germans in the redrawn German borders, with many ironically landing in Munich, the birthplace of Hitler's National Socialist movement.⁶⁸ The expulsion of the remaining Jewish people in Poland reflects how the new Polish state used the shadow cast by the crimes of the Nazis to conduct their own waves of violence and expulsion against non-Poles living in prewar-German territories.

American and Soviet Union forces wreaked havoc upon Germany during the 1940s. Anglo-American forces unleashed tens of thousands of tons of aerial explosives between 1942 and 1945, knowingly annihilating entire German civilian populations. Hundreds of thousands of innocent people lost their lives due to area bombing tactics by the Western Allies to destroy German industrial and cultural centers. Millennium-old historic towns, embedded with the Germanic history of the Saxon Wars for Christendom, were reduced to rubble within five years. Industrial centers, even though heavily damaged, were subjected to deindustrialization policies under the Allied agreements at Potsdam, and much of the economic output of German industry was stripped for reparations. Germans then looked to American financial and humanitarian aid to prevent the region from starving and ultimately collapsing.

After the Western Allies ceased bombing German industry in 1945, Germany laid in a state of peril and required American aid to survive. Through the passage of the American Marshall Plan in 1948 and the establishment of NATO in 1949, the United States guaranteed a safe, secure, and consistent plan of reconstruction for war-torn Western Europe. The American financial stimulus provided to Western Europe, including the Federal German Republic in 1949, created a foundation for the American infiltration of continental Europe, as American industry rebuilt Europe. The European Recovery Act simultaneously stabilized global trade and expanded American financial control through the elimination of financial risk in international markets. The American economy experienced a massive boom as a result. This boom was among the factors that gradually led to New York City supplanting London as the financial capital of the world, a position New York holds to the present day.⁶⁹ France used their occupied zone of Germany to reconstruct its economy and secure markets for French goods. America constructed its plan of controlling Europe by assuring France that Germany would no longer be a threat to French interests. American military security through NATO, combined with economic stability through American markets and financial aid, allowed Europe to quickly rebuild trade relations and infrastructure, while simultaneously cementing American control of European nation-states in the West. Germany was effectively demilitarized, giving France immediate relief from German aggression, but it also gave the United States indefinite control in international politics, as the Cold War was about to begin.

From 1945 to 1949, the Czechs, Poles, and Russians unleashed an aggressive plan of imperialism against the German people in Central and Eastern Europe. They pillaged German towns without mercy while deporting hundreds of thousands of able-bodied men into the interior of their nations for forced labor, where a large portion died from exhaustion. Additionally, the most industrialized region of Europe was rapidly dismantled by Eastern forces without either resistance or limitation and shipped out of German lands to industrialize their own states. The Russians sought these workers to further Soviet modernization and expand Soviet imperial ambitions on the Eastern Front. The significance of the Soviet extraction of advanced German machinery from the Russian Zone allowed Russia to rapidly convert its 'backwards' serf-based economy into an industrialized global power, which rivaled the United States during the Cold War. The Czech and Polish people used the Potsdam Conference of 1945 to enact their territorial and imperial ambitions as well. From the moment their governments went into exile, the Czech and Polish governments discussed in London how they would expel the ethnic Germans residing in what they perceived as their lands.⁷⁰ Their premeditated actions allowed their new states to be among the industrialized

nations of the world, and they also produced ethnically homogenous populations within their borders to consolidate power in the region as the Cold War was set to begin after World War II.

These Eastern nations expelled ethnic Germans from their lands through a series of both ‘wild’ and ‘organized’ expulsion campaigns, which killed between 500,000 and two million Germans. Initial estimates in the early 1950s were as high as over two million Germans from expulsions.⁷¹ There are ongoing historical debates surrounding official death tolls, and these estimates are constantly revised by twentieth-century historians like Norman Naimark. However, the current German government has not changed its stance on the number of German lives lost and officially maintains the original estimate that the lives of between two and two and a half million German civilians were lost during the waves of expulsions.⁷² The number specifically stated by the German government has not been altered since it was specifically stated in 1995. The only source of possible revision of the total number of German civilian deaths acknowledged by the German government came in June 2025, when the German government stated that “hundreds of thousands of people lost their lives” during the expulsions.⁷³ Nonetheless, the high cost of nation-building within the Eastern Bloc was paid in German blood, sweat, and tears.

The death and destruction caused by the Allies far exceeded their war goals. The aggressive expulsion and the confiscation of much of German machinery following the war also exacerbated the suffering of the remaining German population. Postwar West Germany, dependent on American forces for protection against a possible Soviet invasion, also depended on private American financial investments and programs, like the Marshall Plan, to keep the economy afloat, thus capitulating to the growing influence of America in Western Europe. The Soviet Union, Poland, and Czechoslovakia confiscated German territory in the East and forced out ethnic Germans who lived there for centuries. Under the cover of reparations, all three countries looted and redistributed German wealth and German-built industries to their own ethnic populations, while simultaneously forcing able-bodied Germans to engage in hard labor and teach their evictors how to use German machinery to modernize their state. This research on ethnic cleansing during twentieth-century Europe reveals the harsh conditions ethnic Germans faced during and after the Second World War. In fact, this research demonstrates that the history of the postwar suffering experienced by Germans was cast into the shadows of the crimes committed by their own government. The German government may have started the war, but it was the ethnic German civilians who suffered the consequences of the imperialist ambitions of the surrounding states throughout the 1940s. The actions of the Allies in the 1940s undoubtedly produced the conditions for the Cold War, as the Second World War bankrupted the Western European empires and destroyed the military and economic might of Central Europe. Without an empire in Europe to fill the void following WWII, the United States and the Soviet Union competed for the next 40 years to fill it.

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BURN - DESTROY - KILL: GENOCIDE IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

JACOB LEE

Abstract: The perpetration of violence by the Ottoman Empire against its Christian population has been increasingly scrutinized by historians, especially in recent decades. Lagging noticeably behind, however, is the study of those now referred to as “Assyrians,” who occupied Eastern Anatolia alongside the more well studied Armenians at the outbreak of World War I. Historians, such as Taner Akçam, have provided relatively complete accounts of the Ottoman response to the Armenian question, yet individuals such as David Gaunt are still laying the groundwork for the study of the Assyrian genocide. This gap between studies on parallel events is puzzling, and this paper is focused on answering why scholarship on the Armenian genocide developed faster than the Assyrian genocide. Through newspapers, memoirs, and official reports, the delay in Assyrian genocide scholarship can be attributed to a lack of global visibility and the inherently fractured nature of their national identity.

The tragedy of World War I was not confined to trenches and soldiers. In the Ottoman province of Diyarbakir, Rafael de Nogales, a Venezuelan mercenary, witnessed the violent persecution of the Christian population under the governor’s authority. Mehmed Reshid, a loyal follower of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), allegedly received a simple message regarding the treatment of the Christian populace. Simply: “Burn - Destroy - Kill.”¹ The events following this brief message make up one of the first modern genocides of the twentieth century.

The Ottoman response to the “Armenian Question” resulted in the deaths of an estimated one million Armenian lives. Ottoman soldiers and militias looted stores, burned villages, and shattered communities. Men, women, and children were gathered and subjected to a variety of inhumane practices. Today, the genocide is recognized by several countries across the globe, including the United States. Yet the former Ottoman Empire, now Turkey, has continued to downplay the violence and deny its official role in sanctioning and organizing the genocide, even as scholars, missionaries, and diplomats have condemned this event since the beginning.

This period of Ottoman history, however, was not confined to the Armenian experience alone. Only much later did other groups begin to receive similar attention for their part in what was really a greater campaign of Christian cleansing. Since the 1990s, one such diaspora, the Assyrians, has begun to loudly proclaim its own suffering at the hands of the Ottoman Empire. Several countries, such as Sweden, have already officially recognized the Assyrian genocide. The question this paper seeks to answer is why this wave of recognition for Christians slaughtered did not emerge in tandem with the interest shown in the Armenian genocide.

The Ottoman Empire was composed of various ethnic and religious groups, such as Arabs, Armenians, Assyrians, Greeks, Kurds, and Turks. These groups formed a population of approximately twenty million people, with the latter two comprising a significant majority. Harmony between the groups was far from guaranteed. Violence among these groups was not unusual. As David Gaunt points out, several episodes of targeted violence occurred prior to the twentieth century, serving as a prelude to the greater crimes against humanity that would occur.² Christian groups, as minorities in the Ottoman Empire, were particularly prone to being targeted by local officials, the Islamic public, and Kurdish tribes in the periphery. Reasons for targeting such groups ranged from religious tensions to economic disparity, but later tension between Armenian nationalists and the Ottoman government would expand this conflict to a political one as well. The initial passive bias of the Ottoman government against the Christian minority would evolve into active government persecution following the Balkan Wars and ultimately erupt into a nationwide campaign with the Ottoman entry into World War I. By the time persecution became genocide during the First World War, the Armenians had developed a unified identity, one recognized by Western powers. The Assyrian, in contrast, had no such unity amidst the various denominations they followed. Despite having similar experiences to the Armenians throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it is due to their fractured identity and lack of global visibility that recognition for the Assyrian genocide would not come until long after the recognition of the Armenian genocide.

Regarding certain terminology, this paper uses the term “Assyrian” to refer to the various Syriac-speaking Christians that lived in the Ottoman Empire and identifies the different denominations by their particular Christian faith. In the case of Iran, this paper uses the modern name rather than “Persia” to conform to similar modern scholarship on the subject. The timeline this paper covers spans the nineteenth century and ends in 1923 with the creation of the Republic of Turkey. Although numerous Christian groups experienced violence during this period, the Armenians and Assyrians will be the focus of this paper. This paper will discuss both the Armenian and Assyrian genocides in chronological order, tracing the evolution of violence from the mid-nineteenth century to the formation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923.

On May 27, 1844, a newspaper from London, *The Times*, dedicated a section to the affairs of Turkey, detailing the actions of Badr Khan, a Kurdish emir who had launched two attacks targeting the Christian Assyrians, seizing property and killing members of some six thousand families.³ While persecution of the Christian populace was not new, this one stands out for its scale and specified targeting of particularly Assyrian settlements. The newspaper also mentioned the shallow attempts by the government to rein in Badr Khan for his violent crimes. Only later, when Badr Khan took several regions under his control and established an arms factory, did the Ottoman Empire swoop in to remove the rebellious threat. Other than such significant instances, however, the central government left the periphery to its own devices.

The Ottoman government’s reluctance to interfere stemmed from two factors. First, the region inhabited by Assyrians and Armenians in Eastern Anatolia existed outside the Ottoman central authority. This allowed local leaders to exercise their authority. David Gaunt states that government authority in the periphery came in the form of poorly funded, non-native bureaucrats who were often at the mercy of local leadership. Attempts to bring the periphery firmly under the central government in Constantinople failed to close the gap.⁴ The Tanzimat reforms of 1839 only deepened tensions between the central government and feudal leaders who had grown used to independence. In addition to its policy of centralization, it sought to equalize the status of Muslims and Christians under the law. As this would end the benefits Muslim leadership had over Christians, such as the levying of additional taxes, many resisted the changes, especially further away from the center.⁵ *The Times* reported that the rebellion at Aleppo in 1850 had arisen due to “defiance by the Beys, who wished to preserve their feudal rights, which had been abolished by the Tanzimat.”⁶ The Ottoman government was often more comfortable waiting, as violent pogroms by leaders such as Badr Khan, while damaging, did not leave lasting damage, as matters in the periphery would eventually stabilize. Only direct rebellion, such as the case of Aleppo and the defiance of Badr Khan, would provoke Ottoman interference.

European and American newspapers illustrated the Western outrage held for such visible persecution of Christian citizens. Yet, the violence was somewhat normalized, as it was frequent and mutual between Assyrian and Kurdish tribes. The travelling Reverend William Ainger Wigram remarked that “it was extremely picturesque,” describing how Assyrian and Kurdish tribes raided according to unwritten ethical lines. These lines allowed the region to stabilize yet were becoming harder to follow amid the growing imbalance of power against the Christian Assyrians in the region.⁷ This growing imbalance of power between the Kurdish and Assyrian tribes was in part due to the arming of Kurdish irregulars by the Ottoman Empire in 1877 during the Russo-Turkish War. For the Ottomans, this was an opportunity to secure loyal forces in the periphery, as well as to expand their military. For the Kurdish tribes that enrolled in these ‘Hamidiye’ regiments, it was an opportunity to advance themselves economically and militarily over their rivals.⁸ Having access to better arms and swearing to serve loyally under the Sultan, they were positioned in a sort of legal grey area that allowed for a great deal of freedom. As part of the military, they did not answer to civilian courts; yet, as irregulars, they did not fit under the military discipline enforced on the regular Ottoman forces. This imbalance escalated the violence, as non-Hamidiye Kurds and Assyrians banded together in defensive pacts, which only further drove larger conflicts. Similar to the way numerous nations joined World War I because of defensive pacts, Assyrian tribes responded to their Kurdish allies’ call for help, leading to Kurds and Assyrians fighting other Kurds and Assyrians. Consequently, the eastern regions of the periphery were awash with chaos and violence, enough to mark the regions as unstable in the writings of missionaries. This instability is recorded by the Ottoman government as various difficulties faced in implementing the Tanzimat, resulting from a lack of

logistical resources in addition to numerous mediations between warring tribes.⁹ Kurdish and Assyrian conflicts, however, were not the only relevant events leading up to the genocides of the twentieth century.

Armenians were another minority within the Ottoman Empire, though notably of a much larger size, with estimates around two million in comparison to the five to six hundred thousand Assyrians by the twentieth century.¹⁰ A majority resided in Anatolia, especially the eastern part, which overlapped with that of the Assyrians, although ultimately located further north. Armenians living in the periphery were similarly exposed to bouts of violence at the hands of their Kurdish neighbors. The Russo-Turkish War that took place between 1828 and 1829 further established divides between the Kurds and the Christian Armenians, many of whom saw the invading Russians as a symbol of Christian hope, even going so far as to attempt to travel into Russia with the retreating army after the war. Though they were denied entry, James Brant, the British consul travelling through the region, commented that this interaction with the Russians heightened hostilities, as the Kurdish tribes “regarded the Armenians as partisans of the invaders, and made no scruple in plundering and often murdering them.”¹¹ Ottoman policies reinforced this divide further, following the end of the war in 1829. Tax policies targeted Christians while favoring Kurds, which reinforced the second-class citizenship of the Armenians. These issues gained attention during the Crimean War from 1853 to 1856. Russia, under Tsar Nicholas I, hoped to assert itself as the protector of Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Empire, but failed as both Britain and France intervened to maintain the balance of power in the region. In doing so, they also asserted themselves as the protectors of Christianity, placing pressure upon the Ottoman Empire to implement reforms to improve the treatment of non-Muslim citizens. The intervening European powers both benefited from their intervention. The two asserted themselves as the protectors of Christians beyond Europe, and Britain secured itself free trade with the Ottoman Empire. Interest in the well-being of Ottoman Christians temporarily waned in the following years, only to be seriously addressed again with the outbreak of yet another war between the Ottoman Empire and Russia.

The issue of the Armenian question intensified because of the Ottoman defeat in 1878. Lasting from 1877 to 1878, the Russo-Turkish War dealt a serious blow to the Ottoman Empire, which lost chunks of its European territory, such as Romania, Serbia, Montenegro, and Bulgaria. Meanwhile, the Russian army pushed all the way down to Istanbul, causing an influx of refugees, which placed further strain on the already crumbling economy of the Ottoman Empire. In the midst of this conflict, several representatives of the Armenian *millet* spoke out in 1877 against depredations perpetrated against the Armenian *millet* by Ottoman troops, especially irregular units comprised of Kurds.¹² The issues raised by the spokesmen, who were supported by Greek and even Turkish speakers, were of blatant corruption by the Ottoman administration, which allowed for the mistreatment of its Christian citizens, including bribes offered by offending Kurds to avoid punishment.¹³ As they had armed the Hamidiye regiment, the Ottoman government intensified the Kurdish-Armenian conflict. This imbalance served a purpose, as the Ottoman Empire had grown concerned about the loyalties of their Armenian citizens, and feared that their religion made them more sympathetic to Russia and its Armenian population. The rise of Armenian nationalism justified this fear. Hoping to find their own answer to the Armenian Question and to determine their own destiny, Armenian nationalists such as Grigor Artsruni advocated a joint struggle with the Russians against Turkish tyranny, believing it would lead to the best possible outcome.¹⁴ Not everyone agreed with this position. Many were hopeful due to the outcome of the Berlin Congress, as the European powers had taken advantage of the defeated Ottoman Empire to further secure the safety and security of the Christian population living under the Sultan. Article 61, for example, was meant to guarantee the safety of the Armenian provinces from harassment by Kurds and Circassians.¹⁵ *The Times* later suggested that many Turkish Armenians did not want to live under Russia; instead, they aimed to secure their own positions in Turkey.¹⁶ However, a small fraction of Armenian parties were more willing to engage in active violence to establish a secure Armenian nation-state. While small violent incidents occurred, there was nothing out of the ordinary for the periphery until years after the Congress of Berlin. It would not be until 1894 that the Armenian Question would effectively detonate, dragging Christian Assyrians with it.

To understand how the Armenians and Assyrians were intertwined in the violence that followed, further explanation of where they stood and who they were in the Ottoman Empire is necessary. The Armenian population in the Ottoman Empire prior to World War I numbered around two million, many of whom lived in the provinces of Bitlis, Diyarbekir, Erzurum, Harput, Sivas, and Van in Eastern Anatolia. A majority of the settlements sat close

to the Russian border in the periphery of the Ottoman Empire, where most worked the land as farmers and shepherds.¹⁷ Although these areas are referred to as the “Armenian highlands” by scholars such as Raymond Kévorkian, these provinces were predominantly Muslim, outnumbering the Armenians by several million across Anatolia.¹⁸ The most sizable concentration of Armenians existed in urban areas, such as Istanbul. Though the Tanzimat had increased religious tensions, the results it bore for the overall improvement of Christian opportunities were evident in city-dwelling Armenians. A British traveler, William Wittman, recounts the experiences of Armenian merchants in the early 1800s as “melancholy to the extreme... liable to an annual capitation, or poll tax, varying according to degrees and circumstances.”¹⁹ The Tanzimat curtailed this practice of targeted taxation on Christian merchants, and the British trade deals established in 1838 brought an influx of foreign capital into the Ottoman Empire. More favorable to Christian Ottomans, European merchants worked well with Armenian merchants and bankers, who assisted in the form of local business knowledge and credit. In return, European trade partners helped obtain legal protections and further tax exemptions.²⁰

The Assyrians shared many similarities with the Armenians in Eastern Anatolia. They numbered around five hundred thousand, occupying Southeastern Anatolia in Bitlis, Van, Diyarbakir, Harput, and Aleppo. Most were peasant farmers and shepherds who, unlike the Armenians, were not nearly as representative in official registers as bankers, merchants, and other finance-related positions. They did, however, benefit from Christian missionaries, who established schools and provided support for Ottoman Christians, including what would later become Euphrates College in 1852. Technical and professional skills went hand in hand with the concepts of liberty, equality, and independence, though the Assyrian population was unable to fully adopt these ideals due to their division. Whereas the Armenians were mainly Gregorian Christians and unified by this part of their identity, the Assyrians followed numerous Christian ideologies, spoke different languages, and were even referred to differently depending on sources. Gaunt puts into perspective the difficulty of parsing Assyrians from other groups, as in many cases they were closely assimilated, speaking the same languages and intermarrying amidst Kurds, Armenians, and other Assyrians.²¹ Despite this, notable tensions prevented the various denominations of Assyrians from working too closely with one another. Wigram writes of the rivalry between the various Assyrian denominations, such as the Nestorians and Jacobites, stating “[both] sects are equally obnoxious to the intermediate orthodox; but they are even more obnoxious to each other, for they draw towards opposite poles.”²² In his own conclusions, he believed that the Armenians, both numerous and nationally aspiring, were far more at odds with the Ottoman government than the smaller, politically unconcerned Assyrians.²³ His views, though not entirely incorrect, failed to fully grasp the extent to which violence would involve both groups.

The region of Sasun in eastern Anatolia would be the grounds for a brief, violent rebellion in 1894. *The Times* reported that violence had broken out between Hamidiye irregulars and Armenian villagers in Sasun. The Kurds sought to extract additional taxes from the Armenians, but were violently denied.²⁴ The retreating Kurds, who claimed a violent Christian uprising, led to an immediate and overwhelming military response by the Ottoman government. The army swept across several settlements and claimed two thousand lives. This massacre, as was considered, made international headlines. To Europe, this appeared to be a clear breach of what had been established at the Congress of Berlin, specifically in reference to Article 61.

An Armenian national movement, the Social Democrat Hunchakian Party or Hunchakian Revolutionary Party, had actively incited hostilities in the region. Opposed to Russian territorial aims, yet dissatisfied with Turkish oppression, the party aimed to create its own independent Armenia. With several of their members having been hanged in 1893, Sasun was considered to be nothing short of a victory for the goals of the party, having stirred the European powers to once again intervene on behalf of the Christian Armenian population.²⁵ In many ways, Sasun and the massacres that followed across the 1890s revitalized European concerns over the treatment of Christians in the Ottoman Empire, with the Armenians serving as the poster child of Ottoman Christians, abused and subjected to the cruelties of the ‘Sick Man’ of Europe. The rivalry between the Christian West and Islamic Turkey meant that certain details could be ignored in favor of casting a more positive light on a relatable people, something the Armenians, by this point, could adequately provide. Whereas the Assyrians were still a collection of various Syriac-speaking communities belonging to numerous denominations of Christianity, the efforts of Armenians as a unified group had been recognized on the global stage. In a report on the affairs of Turkey in 1895, Secretary of State

Richard Olney stated, “The political aspirations of the Armenians have, for the most part, taken shape in foreign countries, where Armenian societies have been formed, avowing as their purpose the attainment of autonomy for Armenia.”²⁶ A quick word search for “Assyrian” across the same fifteen hundred pages yields nothing.

The violence that took place in Sasun once more stirred the attention of Russia, France, and Britain, but while investigations were eventually launched and evidence of the massacre found, the nations of Europe were hesitant to intervene much further. According to Davide Rodogno, Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Russia all opposed humanitarian intervention. While humanitarian concerns and its Treaty of Berlin obligations stirred the French government, it prioritized maintaining relations with Russia, thereby limiting its intervention. Britain, pressured by public outrage as newspapers announced the findings in Sasun, brought forward another discussion of reforms during the summer of 1895.²⁷ Unaware of European hesitance, the Hunchak party sought further Western attention for the Armenian cause.

1895 was characterized by greater outbreaks of violence between Christians and the various agents of the Ottoman Empire. The Bab Ali demonstration and the Zeitun Rebellion were both efforts by the Hunchackian party to attain some measure of consideration for the Armenians and their plight under the current rule. The former was a peaceful protest in Constantinople that ultimately descended to violence as the government cracked down on the protestors, arresting and, in some cases, killing many. The latter was another instance of armed resistance that would continue until 1896. In both instances, European powers pressured the Sultan to accept more favorable terms for the Armenians, such as lowering their taxes and providing greater protection from Kurdish abuses.²⁸ Culminating in the 1895 Armenian Reforms, the European powers hoped to address the demands of the Armenian people and put an end to the Armenian Question, which had by then been referenced in hundreds, if not thousands, of articles, books, and other texts.

The existence of Armenians and their plight was, by this point, thoroughly ingrained in the consciousness of the global powers, and would only be further reinforced by the massacres at Diyarbekir in late 1895. According to Gaunt, ethnically targeted riots were stirred up by local officials, riding a wave of anti-Christian sentiment that had further blossomed after the announcement of the Armenian Reforms, which notably had not been enforced, if they had even been signed.²⁹ The official narrative of the event, according to the Ottoman Empire, was that the riots had been started by Armenians, with gunshots being aimed at Muslims during Friday prayers. Additionally, *The Times* reported that the majority of damage recorded by the Ottoman officials was to Muslim property, upwards of ninety percent. Lastly was the implication that “foreign influence” had caused the violence.³⁰ Past the official narrative of the Sultan, the reality was that a mob had been encouraged to attack the Armenian district and its inhabitants, leaving lasting damage that, according to Wigram, who was in the region years later, never fully recovered from the devastation.³¹ Once more, newspapers raised the Armenian question, now more relevant than ever. Beneath the concerns and accusations levied for and against the Armenians, however, rested the damages inflicted on the Christian Assyrians during this period.

There is some confusion regarding the actual Christian casualties during the riots at Diyarbekir, with reports ranging from four hundred eighty according to the provincial governor, which included casualties from similar riots in surrounding villages, to as high as two thousand, according to the French consul who was present during the event.³² Gaunt appears to prefer a more moderate count, noting that at least one hundred sixty-seven Assyrians of various denominations were killed while eighty-nine homes and three hundred eight shops were looted and burned.³³ Wigram noted that the Assyrian district had received less damage in the aftermath of the riots; yet, because of this, he suspected that the affair had not been solely driven by religious hatred, but rather that the riot had been political in nature.³⁴ In a sense, there was a political motive.

Armenian intellectuals present at the Congress of Berlin had demonstrated their political savvy and desire for recognition as a unified, political body. Though not a state in the traditional sense, their identity as Armenian was internationally recognized by this point, whereas the various denominations of Syriac-speaking Christians were not. The French consul suspected there to be more to the riots than aimless violence, stating, “if the Armenians are indeed the worst treated, it is because they are the most numerous and because it is easy to portray the cruelty with

which they are subjected as a form of repression necessary for public safety.”³⁵ The orchestration of the violence, though targeted at the Armenian populace, showed signs of the broader targeting of Christians that would occur during World War I. The Young Turk revolution, the Ottoman defeat in the First Balkan War, and the outbreak of World War I would be the final necessary steps towards both the Armenian and Assyrian genocides.

The decline of the Ottoman Empire had been evident to the world for decades, so much so that newspapers brazenly declared it the “Sick Man” of Europe, even prior to its major losses of territory in the 1877 Russo-Turkish War.³⁶ Amidst economic decline and political dissatisfaction, a revolution arose in 1908. Spear-headed by the Committee of Union and Progress, the Young Turks movement reduced the Sultan to merely a symbolic position. The newly instated revolutionaries were then left to fulfill the promises of their movement, which at the time was to secure the multicultural Ottoman Empire. For Christians, the party represented the real possibility of change for the status of Armenians and Assyrians, as the party itself was composed of Turks, Arabs, Greeks, and Armenians, though notably none who would be readily identified as Assyrian.³⁷ Regardless, the ousting of Sultan Abdul Hamid II was a sign of non-Muslim political participation and promised a real end to the poorly enforced reforms under Hamid II.

From 1908 to 1914, the Ottoman government underwent a drastic shift in its perception of national identity. In the beginning, its conception of a diverse Ottoman identity was evident in their creation of the Electoral Law, which specified a representative for every fifty thousand men in each province.³⁸ The prior system of fixed quotas was considered incompatible with the integrational policies of the Young Turks, as at the time there was still a sizable Christian population within the Ottoman Empire. Internal conflict would begin to show by the following year, as the CUP proposed that representatives needed to pass Turkish reading and writing tests, which they would fail to pass at the time.³⁹ Reports of corruption grew notably amidst the CUP and its rivals. Violence, intimidation, and coercion ran alongside concerns over electoral fraud. While it is uncertain how genuine these accusations were, Hasan Kayali notes that “there is little doubt that the CUP and its partisans... did resort to desperate and scandalous measures.”⁴⁰ The loss of Ottoman territories in Europe, where a majority of its Christian population existed, was catastrophic for non-Muslim representation, which showed itself in the decline of Christian support. Promises made to Armenians were forgotten, such as a sizable donation to their schools, and representation in the government only dwindled from there.⁴¹

On the other side of the issue, Kurds such as the Hamidiye that once benefited under the Sultan now found their positions threatened, and a new wave of violence began. *The Times* reported on the violence between Kurds and Assyrians as well as on raids on Armenian settlements, following failed attempts to collect taxes that had once been acceptable under the Sultan. Notably, the British consul interfered, dispersing the violence, but only for the Armenians; the violence between Kurds and Assyrians was left unresolved.⁴² The continuation, if not intensification, of violence following the rise of the CUP was complicated by continuous governmental unrest. A revolt led by Sultan Hamid II in 1909 threatened to reinstate the authority of the Sultan, and military force was used to put down the counter-revolution. In 1912, amidst the turmoil of the Italo-Turkish War, accusations of electoral fraud pitted the Freedom and Accord Party against the CUP. Eventually, a coup occurred in 1913, bringing a Young Turk dictatorship to power under the triumvirate of Talaat Pasha, Enver Pasha, and Cemal Pasha. The triumvirate embraced a Turk nationalist agenda that was interwoven with Islam. This ideology would manifest in the First Balkan War, which would set the stage for subsequent operations during World War I.

The Italo-Turkish War (1911-1912) demonstrated that the Ottoman Empire had truly fallen from its once glorious heights. Before the war even officially ended, the Balkan League, consisting of Montenegro, Serbia, Greece, and Bulgaria, declared war on the Ottoman Empire to claim territories that housed their respective national populations. The war was over by 1913, and so was Ottoman control over what was left of its European territory. Streaming into Constantinople and Western Anatolia were waves of Muslims, bringing with them stories of sexual assault, mass killings, and various other crimes. A *New York Times* headline claimed it to be deliberate targeting by the Serbian army, though as a whole, the Balkan powers were all complicit in targeting Muslim refugees.⁴³ The shock and misery experienced by the survivors fueled anger at the Christian Balkans and, subsequently, the Christian minority present in Turkey. These feelings were further supported by the new dictatorial triumvirate, particu-

larly the Minister of the Interior, Talaat Pasha, who made efforts to house the new waves of Muslim refugees. In a development that set a precedent, lands owned by Christians in Eastern Anatolia were claimed by the government, while the owners were ousted under suspicion of disloyalty to Turkey.⁴⁴ Up to this point, much of the violence had been tolerated by the Turkish government. Reforms agreed to on paper were ignored, leaving Armenians and Assyrians to their own devices amid intensifying violence that plagued the periphery. The deportation of Assyrians from Eastern Anatolia, particularly the Hakkari Mountains, “emphasized the crucial aim of a safe Muslim Turkish home in Asia Minor at the expense of the Ottoman Christians.”⁴⁵

Reverend James Stewart, who was present in Latakia in modern-day Syria just before the outbreak of World War I, reported to the American consul Stanley Hollis on notable instability between the local Christian and Muslim populations. He claimed that a conspiracy against the former had been prevented by local authorities, but the situation had reached a boiling point.⁴⁶ Turkish-Armenian relations were evidently of visible concern, as just before the outbreak of World War I another set of reform proposals had been foisted onto the ailing Ottoman Empire at the suggestion of Russia and pro-Russian Armenians in the Caucasus. Two zones were to be established out of the ‘Armenian provinces.’ For Russia, it would further cut away at Ottoman territory while further expanding Russian influence. For many Ottoman Armenians, however, the reform plan offered a reprieve from decades of intensifying Christian-Muslim relations.⁴⁷ For the Ottoman Empire, it was an unfortunate reminder of the questionable loyalties of the Armenian people, raised just before the outbreak of war.

While tensions between the Armenians and Turks were headed towards a path of no return, the actions of some Assyrians show their own awareness of this trend. ‘Abd an-Nur Aslan, a leader in the Syriac Orthodox community, had formed strong connections with the Turkish state and actively demonstrated his loyalty to the Ottoman Empire by gathering funds for the war effort in 1912. At the same time, he sought to encourage further learning of the Syriac language and church history. Partly responsible for these two paths was his desire to further separate his community from that of the Armenians, which had been divided into a *millet* separate from the Armenians just before the twentieth century.⁴⁸ Similarly driven to support Assyrian learning while displaying loyalties to the Ottoman Empire was Aşur Yusuf. An Assyrian professor at Euphrates College, the man had celebrated the Young Turk revolution in 1908 and participated in the Balkan Wars in 1912. The man had similar goals of developing and protecting Assyrian culture, though in a more secular direction than that of Aslan.⁴⁹ Both men, well known for their respective places in Assyrian society, would fail to fully separate the goals of the Assyrians from the plight of the Armenians. Their overall identity as “Christian” would condemn them.

The Turkish military was faced with a manifestation of the past hundred years of religious tension in the form of the Turkish Armenian conflict with the onset of the war. Both the Ottomans and Russians would bring with them complements of Armenian troops. Though initially Armenian troops fighting for the Ottomans were praised for their role, it quickly soured with the bitter defeats of the Ottoman Third Army against the Russians.⁵⁰ Further complicating matters were the appearance of Armenian deserters and guerrillas in Eastern Anatolia. The existence of such groups is not in doubt, though scholars disagree whether such were signs of an Armenian revolt or merely the scapegoats of Turkish conspiracy.⁵¹⁵² Perhaps somewhere in the middle, as even Henry Morgenthau, supporter of the Armenian cause, admitted that there were likely at least a few such desertions.⁵³ The results of these perceived betrayals and the overall threat of the Armenians to Turkish national security led to the disarmament of Armenians serving in the Ottoman army, where they were reduced to laborers. Morgenthau, present in Constantinople as the US ambassador, would later state that the situation of Armenian troops was akin to that of slavery, “driven by the whips and bayonets of the Turks... They were given only scraps of food.”⁵⁴ Those who could not keep up were killed, and later, such excuses were no longer necessary to execute Armenian troops.

The plight of the Armenians by foreigners such as Morgenthau. A German translator, Heinrich Vierbücher, would recall Talaat being particularly agitated by the Russian proposed Armenian zones, commenting on the affair in 1915 amidst deportations of the Armenians.⁵⁵ Johann Bernstorff, the German ambassador, delivered a memorandum to the US Secretary of State detailing their regret towards “the expulsion of Armenians,” finding that “most of them perished even before reaching their destination.” Additionally, there is the brief, yet important, admission

that “In some places, at Mardin for instance, all the Christians without distinction of race or faith have had the same fate.”⁵⁶ Not even a year later, the fate of the Assyrians quickly followed the Armenians.

Several reasons made the Assyrians a relevant factor in the genocide that took place in the Ottoman Empire. First, much like their Armenian counterparts, groups of Assyrians, namely groups of Nestorians, had been in contact with the Russians by the end of the nineteenth century. Gaunt refers to a decree sent to the province of Van by Talaat Pasha, ordering the rounding up of Assyrians, especially those close to the border with Iran, where military operations were ongoing, for them to be dispersed amongst Muslim settlements in groups of no more than twenty dwellings.⁵⁷ The Assyrians, however, were far more fortunately positioned to resist, as news from fleeing Armenians warned of the wave of violence that accompanied such deportations. As such, Assyrian communities prepared defenses or fled across the border into Iran. For those who remained, the process of mere deportation would quickly fall apart.

Identifying when Assyrians were first openly killed is difficult to pinpoint. Unlike the Armenians, there were far fewer urban elites living in places such as Constantinople, many of whom had been removed from their positions and imprisoned in April of 1915.⁵⁸ Much of the persecution aimed at the Assyrians could be found in the periphery, where early on, villagers were witnessed to have been forced to either convert to Islam or die, though further into 1915, these stories are drowned out by accounts of outright murder. A German military advisor, Max von Scheubner-Richter, informed the German chancellor of the Assyrian plight, stating that they had been driven from their homes and now took up arms with the Russians.⁵⁹ In particular, the Urmia region was where the killing of Assyrians first intensified beyond the original order to deport them, as Iranian officials and Christian missionaries reported that Christian villages were being “barbarously killed.”⁶⁰ As stated by von Scheubner-Richter, Assyrians had taken up arms to fight alongside the Russians against the Ottomans, especially in Urmia, where many had originally fled, only to find themselves again facing forced conversion and violence. This had the effect of further escalating tensions, as the resistance of Assyrian militias to the Russians mirrored that of the Armenians. This culminated in the purging of Assyrian troops alongside the Armenians in the Ottoman army, according to von Scheubner-Richter.⁶¹ This information would not remain within the private German military sphere, as Arthur Zimmermann would write in 1916 that news of the violence against Christians had led to outrage amongst the German public.⁶² What occurred in Urmia, however, was only the beginning.

The events orchestrated in the province of Diyarbekir by its governor, Mehmed Reshid, are the most compelling evidence of genocidal intent and action in the Ottoman Empire. Reshid, born in Russia, had experienced persecution by the Orthodox Church, forcing him and his family to flee to the Ottoman Empire, where he would join the CUP.⁶³ Serving the party for years, he was installed as governor of Diyarbekir in August of 1914.⁶⁴ In 1915, when the deportations and killings began, Reshid would turn his attention to the Armenians and Assyrians residing within the various regions in Diyarbekir, putting together armed militias to carry out the gathering and killing of Christians. So efficient and open were these killings that they were internationally visible. The German vice-consul at Mosul, mortified by the news of the events, demanded that Reshid be recalled from his position.⁶⁵ A French monk, Jacques Rhétoré, estimated that around seventy-two percent of the Assyrian population had been eradicated across Diyarbekir by 1916.⁶⁶ In response to several concerning reports, Talaat sent a telegram to Reshid. He did not deny the massacres but instead ordered the governor to limit his “disciplinary measures and policies” to the Armenians for fear of poor public opinion.⁶⁷ Reshid would continue his personal genocide, unpunished, until being removed from his position shortly before the end of the war. Not for the massacres, which he would never be held accountable for, but for the embezzlement of the possessions he had taken from his wealthier victims.⁶⁸

The conclusion of World War I in late 1918 brought opportunities for diplomatic meetings between representatives to establish treaties that determined the conflict’s financial and political outcomes. The Paris Peace Conference became the grounds on which Armenian and Assyrian reparations were expected to have been considered. In truth, it revealed what was already clear just prior to the twentieth century. For the Armenians, and subsequently the Assyrians, the European powers “had no particular sympathy for the Armenians and would have gladly done without the Armenian Question at a time when international relations were troubled by continental rivalries, imperial tensions, and wars.”⁶⁹ The devastation of World War I had exhausted what sympathies they had for a minority

population far from Western Europe. The fractured nature of the Assyrian delegation hampered their efforts to be formally recognized, as they were unable to present a unified, national stance.⁷⁰ Despite apparent apathy toward the situation in Eastern Anatolia, British and French diplomats included the possibility of an Armenian state in Eastern Anatolia, alongside removing various pieces of territory from Ottoman control. In addition, the Allies were to control the Ottoman Empire's finances going forward.⁷¹ Drafted as the Treaty of Sèvres, it failed to be implemented due to the successful resistance of the Turkish National Movement, which led the Allies to negotiate the Treaty of Lausanne. Unlike the Treaty of Sèvres, the Treaty of Lausanne secured the new Republic of Turkey many assets and concessions that would have placed it in a similarly disadvantaged position as Germany. For the Armenians and Assyrians, whose perpetrators were yet to be charged, the treaty provided amnesty for perceived crimes committed during World War I, effectively ending further investigations into the matter of genocide.⁷²

The Armenian and Assyrian genocides were messy affairs with scholarship that is still far from complete. The Armenian genocide, however, has received a fair amount of study up to this point, with scholars arguing both for and against its designation as a genocide. No such argument, at least none as thoroughly researched as McCarthy's, exists to place doubt on the legitimacy of an Assyrian genocide; unlike the plight of the Armenians, which had been readily visible and heavily reported on, scholars are still struggling to find compelling enough evidence to argue for its existence in the first place. Gaunt and Üngör, both having written several pieces each on the subject, appear to struggle with finding new, reliable sources to add to the scholarship. Gaunt uses the statistics provided by the French monk, Rhétoré, across multiple works with no additional voices to strengthen his evidence of the population drop in Diyarbakir, which he himself does little to distinguish just what percentage of those losses is from deportations or fleeing refugees, and how many can be said for certain were executed. Oppositional scholars such as McCarthy would claim bias, but the reality of the Assyrian genocide is that the scholarship is still new. Most of the scholarly works referenced in this paper regarding the Armenian genocide are, on average, older than those of the Assyrian scholarly works, with some extreme examples dating to the mid-twentieth century, shortly after World War II, when the term genocide was born.

The question then, which this paper attempts to answer, is why this discrepancy exists. Looking at the evidence, there are several aspects that are very clear. First, both Armenians and Assyrians were being persecuted, and various Western powers were aware of it. The frantic writings of Morgenthau to the Secretary of State echo the complaints of the Germans present in the Ottoman Empire. Newspapers made sure that the persecutions leading up to the outbreak of World War I were in no way secret to the public, as *The Times* and *New York Times* were eager to include such eye-catching headlines. Missionaries and travelers, such as the British Wigram, noted the lasting damage in the Armenian and Assyrian districts he traveled through. Evidence exists that the world knew of the circumstances of both the Armenians and Assyrians across political figures, religious leaders, and the public, so why is it that the Armenian genocide became recognized first?

As stated earlier, the two genocides this paper discusses are messy, so it should be no surprise that the reason for one has become more 'relevant' than the other is not simply answered. The actions of the Hunchakian party did much to recapture European attention to the Armenian Question, which kept European interest aimed their way. The rising tensions it caused, and the furthering of frictions with the Islamic subjects of the Ottoman Empire, only increased the visibility of Christian Armenians but left the various denominations of Assyrians to the side. While to a degree, it could be tentatively stated that this also attracted more eyes onto the Assyrian people, the poster child of Ottoman Christians was by and large the Armenians, who were viewed as a large, unified group of Christians that the European public "wrongly assumed to be preponderant over all other peoples."⁷³ The Assyrians, then, were fated to be considered no more than a minority from the beginning, who were only ever truly unified as Assyrians after World War I. Even then, it would take much longer for the Nestorians, Jacobites, and Syriac Churches to fully embrace their growing national identity. Meanwhile, the Armenians already had an existing diaspora to turn to when fleeing the Ottoman Empire and the later Republic of Turkey, such as in Russia and the United States. They also left a lasting impression upon those who witnessed their misery, leading to Morgenthau and many missionaries writing extensively on the Armenian genocide early after the war. It would be incorrect to ascribe this phenomenon to a mere difference in population and levels of suffering. Rather, the Assyrians, unable to remove themselves from the religious, nationalist conflict brewing in the Ottoman Empire, and unable to form a unified identity, found

themselves spread across the world, forced to gather themselves until the late twentieth century, where their voices would begin to be heard, this time in unity.

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LOSING HOMELANDS, MAKING HOMES: PONTIAN IDENTITY ACROSS TIME

DEVON E. HAYES

Abstract: The Pontians are a diasporic people whose history extends to antiquity. Often framed by scholars and nationalist rhetoric as “Greek,” they are better understood as a mixed-Hellenic diaspora with fluid ethnic and cultural boundaries. This adaptability enabled survival through successive deportations from their homeland in the 1920s and shaped a global diaspora that maintains Hellenic ties while sustaining a distinct identity beyond modern nation-state categories. Drawing on interviews, archival Soviet documents, and ethnographic and anthropological analysis, this paper examines how Pontians negotiate belonging and construct home. It argues that Pontian identity challenges nationalist narratives and complicates prevailing theories of diaspora, nationalism, and home.

There is nothing better than home. This is a sentiment shared within the Pontian Greek diaspora. The members of this diaspora however, despite carrying the moniker of “Greek,” come largely from the eastern edge of the Black Sea. They were ousted, resettled, deported, resettled again, and repatriated at a relatively rapid pace between the years of 1923 and 1992. But where was their homeland? For some, it was Greece. For others, it was southern Russia. For some still, it was the soil on which they stood. Defying the modernist-nationalistic expectations that others hold, the Pontians transcend both ethnic and national boundaries by creating themselves a home no matter where they went. When they were not wanted in one, they left for another. Where there was no home, they created one. For a large portion of the ethnic group, this meant rejecting a country that did not see them as unique. With these ideas in mind, this project explains how Pontian Greeks have constructed “home” after successive deportations, repatriations, and return migrations primarily from the 1920s to the modern day.

The Pontians are a Hellenic ethnic group that established colonies along the Black Sea coasts of modern Türkiye, Russia, and Ukraine. Their name comes from the region known as Pontus, which lies in the northeastern edge of Anatolia, home to the most famous Pontian colony, Trebizond. With over 2600 years of history, they remained undisturbed despite the rise and fall of empires (one of which was their own), political shakeups, and religious turmoil; however, Pontian settlement in the region ended after the Turkish government exiled them in the 1920s. They fled to Russia but were later deported by the Stalinist government. They lived in Central Asia for five decades before Greece extended repatriation visas, allowing them to return “home.” This led to the larger question: where was home?

Using the historical timeline as a background, this paper shows how the Pontians developed a unique ethno-cultural identity separated from the idea of a modern nation-state. After 1992, many of the Pontians, fed up with Russia, took advantage of the repatriation visa to return to Greece. Others returned to southern Russia, going back to the villages of their childhood. Others stayed in Central Asia, forming Greek societies and communities, integrating but not fully assimilating into their host country. This study examines three key questions: First, how do Pontian people, whether collectively or individually, define “homeland” and “home”? Second, how does the Pontian ethnic identity challenge modernist-nationalistic ideas of belonging? Third, how have historical changes in national boundaries shaped Pontian ethnic identity? This paper argues that Pontian ethno-cultural identity developed as a *unique* Hellenic identity removed from a sense of belonging to a single nation-state.

This study is based on archival research and semi-structured interviews. The archival documents come primarily from Soviet People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD) orders, which have been collected, edited, and electronically stored. Additional sources come from United States consulate records, oral interviews available through archived journal collections, video, and newspapers, both foreign and domestic. Secondary sources consulted for this research include sociological/ethnographical monographs, academic journals, theses, and comparative studies focusing on similar Hellenic ethnic groups. All these sources help piece together how this subgroup of the Greek diaspora developed over time. By analyzing these sources thematically and chronologically, this study traces the shift in Pontian identity across all presented migration periods. Additional theoretical framework guiding this research comes largely from ethnography. Neo-Boasian ethnographical approaches are specifically implemented by

Ira Bashkow and Matti Bunzl and later refined by Anton Popov.¹ This choice of anthropological ethnographers is important, as they all come from the intellectual lineage of Franz Boas who, in his *Mind of Primitive Man*, pushed forward cultural relativism and the importance of self-moderation prior to examining another ethnic group.

Later scholars, Ira Bashkow and Matti Bunzl, expanded the idea of permeable boundaries in culture in the early 2000s. Ira Bashkow is an anthropologist whose ideas of permeable boundaries apply heavily to the Pontians, a people whose history placed them in geographic proximity to different ethnic groups. Matti Bunzl's work within Foucauldian anthropology can be similarly used for examining the Pontians by assessing how their culture has been translated through modernity. As modern nation-states developed a sense of nationalistic ethnic homogeneity, the Pontians were invariably forced to identify as Greek by various governments. This surge of nationalism is a challenge to their self-identification and cultural understanding. Nationalist movements also force the Pontians into an "Us" vs. "Them" struggle, a struggle that they have been dealing with since antiquity.

The choice of Anton Popov is clear for two reasons: first, he used the ethnographic interpretations pushed forward by Bashkow, thereby drawing a direct lineage to Boas; second, he used those interpretations to study the Pontians of his home region of Krasnodar Krai, located in southwestern Russia. By studying them in a post-Soviet environment of their choosing, Popov created a strong foundation for future Pontian studies. This paper uses these four ethnographers' theoretical ideas by taking them a step further by examining the Pontians as a *distinct Hellenic* identity. This paper examines Pontian migration between countries after the fall of the USSR using the theory of Counter-Migration that Anastasia Christou and Russell King developed in their joint work on diasporic return.² Their research on Greek diasporic populations from the United States and Germany provides a framework for understanding the Pontians' movement and the idea of 'return.' This paper applies this theoretical framework to analyze how a distinct Hellenic group, like the Pontians relocated and redefined home.

Additionally, this paper examines nationalism as defined by the work of Harris Mylonas and Maya Tudor, who draw on Benedict Anderson's concept of "imagined communities."³ Their scholarship is relevant because the Pontians are viewed as a people who lost their "homeland." This paper uses ideas of modernist nationalism and constructed communities to address the varying degrees of rejection the Pontians experienced from Russians and Greeks, as well as their acceptance by the nations of Central Asia and the communities within them. Taken as a whole, this paper draws on interdisciplinary studies to address not just the historical narrative but also the socio-cultural one. This research aims to provide a more nuanced and richer understanding of the Pontians by bringing together the historical documents, interviews, current historiography, and socio-cultural studies, while at the same time addressing the gap in scholarship in English. It will also challenge preconceived notions of ethnic ties and of belonging, as well as the modernist-nationalistic narratives of some nations, such as Greece and Russia. The story of the Pontian Greeks is one of deportation, repatriation, rejection, and belonging, and should not be forgotten.

Telling the modern story of the Pontians would not be possible without a brief discussion of the classical. The Greeks, and by extension the Pontians, had cities and polities on the banks of the Black Sea since the mid-800s BCE.⁴ The most famous of these cities was Trebizond, which authors such as Xenophon referenced in their writings as early as the 400s BCE.⁵ Yet, Greek settlements were not limited to Trebizond. Colonists also settled communities on the northern and northeastern shores of the Black Sea. These colonies include the sites of Olbia and Kerkinitis (western Ukraine and western Crimea), Theodosia and Gorgippia (East Crimea and Southwestern Russia), and even as far up as the mouth of the Don (the site of Tanais).⁶ These settlements show a far-reaching and colonizing Greek peoples.

Several hundred years later, these colonies merged to form the Bosporean Kingdom with the Pontians largely occupying its eastern, Scythian bordering portions. This Bosporean Kingdom was ruled by the Spartocid Dynasty, which was of Thracian origins that were more than likely to have spoken an Ionic dialect.⁷ Over time, the Bosporean Kingdom's power waned, and the Pontic Kingdom under Mithridates I subsumed it. This made the Pontic Kingdom the strongest Koine-speaking polity in the region. The kingdom's reign lasted from the fourth century BCE to the first century CE, even after the Romans conquered it following the Mithridatic Wars.⁸

As linguistic and cultural differences began to grow, the Pontian Greeks continued to thrive. This was especially true in the 300s CE when Emperor Constantine, distancing himself from the nobles of the old Roman heartlands, founded a new capital in Hellenized Anatolia. This transfer of power further protected the Pontians as Koine became the lingua franca of the empire. In the 1200s CE, as the Byzantine (post-Constantine Rome) state grew too weak to hold onto its territories, the Pontians of Trebizond formed a fledgling empire and spread across the northern coast of Anatolia and into the Crimean Peninsula. This coincided with what experts believe to be the true Pontian and Demotic Greek split, from which the differences between the two languages became apparent.⁹ By the 1460s, this maritime empire was conquered by Mehmed the Second, who absorbed it into the Ottoman Empire. Yet, even at this time, the Pontians did not leave the Pontus. Although they were conquered, they were not killed or forced into exile from their homes. Thus, the Pontians continued to thrive on the eastern edge of the Black Sea and Crimea well into the modern age. This shows the resilience of the Pontians as, despite changes occurring around them, they resided in the same geographic locale that they called home for nearly three millennia.

The Pontian experience in the 1920s would be marked by profound change. Having lived in the Pontus since antiquity, the Pontians were generally regarded by European powers as Ottoman citizens. World War I altered this dynamic fundamentally, as the conflict ended in a disastrous defeat for the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, shortly after the war's end, in 1919, the Allied powers authorized Greece to land troops in Ottoman Anatolia. This was done in hopes of regaining territories claimed by Greece under the broader Megali Idea. In 1920, roughly a year after the Greek landing, the Ottoman government under Sultan Mehmed VI agreed to the Treaty of Sèvres.¹⁰ The treaty outlined a plan to partition the Ottoman state among the victorious Allied powers. These proposed partitions allocated territories and spheres of influence to several victorious powers, including Great Britain, France, Italy, and Greece. This threat of partition, and especially the possibility of losing land to the Greeks, inflamed nationalist sentiments within the collapsing Ottoman state. As Greek forces advanced into Anatolia, Field Marshal Mustafa Kemal Pasha resigned his Ottoman military position and began organizing a nationalist resistance movement.¹¹ After helping to establish a nationalist government in Ankara, he coordinated the military campaign that ultimately drove Greek forces out of Anatolia.¹² His success led to the young Grand National Assembly voting to abolish the sultanate in 1922. This culminated in the signing of the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne.¹³

The Greek defeat in the Greco-Turkish War further intensified anti-Greek rhetoric among Turkish nationalists. This was further inflamed by calls for an independent Pontian state by the Patriarch of Trebizond.¹⁴ However, it was not just the Pontian religious elite who made this claim. American agents like Mark L. Bristol, who was stationed in Türkiye, noted grassroots lobbying by the Pontians themselves to achieve this goal.¹⁵ Several of the documents contained in this larger dossier contained mentions to Turkish retaliatory actions against the Greek minority. Amidst territorial adjustments and population arrangements finalized after Lausanne, Greece would give up their Turkish populations, and Türkiye would give up its Greeks.¹⁶ The natural assumption would be that all Greeks would go “home,” back to the motherland from where their ancestors hailed two millennia prior. However, the Pontians boarded vessels not bound for Greece but instead for the closest “friendly” nation, which would keep them by their traditional waters: the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.¹⁷

The separation of Pontian cultural identity across transnational lines highlights a longstanding issue in Pontian identity formation. Since antiquity, the broader geo-political discourse surrounding the Pontians can be best seen in their own language. The Pontian people refer to themselves by the Byzantine title of *Romioi* (Ῥωμαῖοι) or “Roman”. This designation was then transferred to them when they were placed under the Ottoman *millet* system. However, when Mehmed the Conqueror subsumed the *Romioi*, Greeks outside of the Ottoman Empire began using the term *Hellenes* (Ἕλληνες) to refer to themselves. This split between Pontian linguistic self-identification and broader Greek ethnic identification echoed the larger geo-political discourse.

This discourse was reinforced both post-Greek independence and after the Ottoman dissolution. Since the early 1900s (at least verifiable by the sources presented), the Pontians have made *vocal* and *global* claims to their own independent identity via the desire for their own nation-state. This was seen through the patriarch of Trebizond's demands on a visit to London in 1920. On this visit, the patriarch made the following statement: “It is the aim of the Pontic Greeks ... to make Trebizond the capital of a Greek republic... our country was Hellenic before

the coming of Christ and ... remains such.”¹⁸ His use of the terms “Pontic Greeks,” “Greek Republic,” and “Hellenic” points to an interesting distinction. To say that his people were “Greek” and “Hellenic” is very different from calling them “Hellenes.” The patriarch’s words expressed that his desire was not to unite the “Greek” peoples, but rather to entrench the Pontians in their homeland.

For the Pontian Greeks, who spoke the Pontian dialect, the USSR represented a tangential closeness to ‘home.’ The southern crescent of modern-day Russia, the mountains of Georgia and Armenia, and the Crimean Peninsula were all within a day or two’s journey to the Black Sea. They could not go “home” to the Pontus, but they could stay close enough to maintain cultural cohesion.¹⁹ Although there were initial issues with integration, the southern republics already had a similar Greek diaspora since antiquity.²⁰ Dialectal issues were solved by absorption of local loanwords or switching to the language of the nation that they migrated to. This historical resilience of the Pontian Greeks exemplifies what Ira Bashkow describes as a self-made culture, one in which a community adapts and thrives despite external pressures.²¹ Despite living in another country, they were still Pontians; they were still “home.”

The political challenges of the modern era continued to affect Pontian Greeks as they settled in the southern crescent of the USSR. In the 1930s, the Soviet state-initiated Operation Greek, a documented campaign targeting the Greek minority in the southern republics. This operation and the subsequent actions taken were primarily aimed at population control and economics. Families were uprooted and deported to Siberia or, in some cases, executed by the People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD). Several Greek-focused institutions were closed, and the population that was not deported or killed was subdued.

While it was a major event in the history of Soviet-Greek minority relations, integrating Operation Greek into the broader historical narrative raises several interpretive issues. First, there is a lack of accessible primary documentation. Despite efforts to examine available Russian archival material, there are substantial gaps in the record. Additionally, much of the existing historiography is modern and potentially shaped by contemporary political frameworks or nationalist narratives. Second, there is the issue of scale. While deportations did occur, much of the Pontian and broader “Greek” population in the region remained in place. These early actions cannot be equated in magnitude with later NKVD operations, which displaced far larger numbers of ethnic Greeks.

The early stages of repression demonstrate that, despite initial accommodation by the Soviet state, Pontians were ultimately subjected to surveillance, displacement, and systemic marginalization. Despite this marginalization, the Soviet state did not instigate reprisal or take further substantial action, as the country was preoccupied with other matters. In August of 1939, Stalin signed the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact, which secured an alliance with Adolf Hitler’s Nazi Germany prior to invading Poland on the first of the following month. The Soviet-led internal violence of the 1930s ended with violence towards another country, but for the Pontians, the arrival of the 1940s heralded a decade rife with conflict and deportations. Soviet victories on the Eastern Front meant relative stability in the interior. This stability allowed for key soviet party members to pick up their pogroms against the minorities in Russia. Yet, these reprisals did not start with the Pontians.

In June of 1940, Lavrentiy Beria, then head of the NKVD, began drafting policy frameworks for the forced resettlement of minority populations, primarily centered on the city of Murmansk.²² In these first documents, Beria specifies what can be taken and what must be left behind. He also specifies that room should be given for the sale of property, with reimbursement policies and procedures in cases of partial compensation. Beria laid out in itemized language how he would go about his deportations. Plans to follow these deportations would extend to all foreign nationals, but these recommendations by Beria were not acted upon.

Although at the beginning of World War II, some deportations may have occurred; primary attention was devoted to the war. It would not be until mid-1942 that Stalin eventually returned NKVD attention toward the southern republics. This turn towards the southern republics was predicated on the idea that minorities in this region were aiding foreign powers during the invasion. In a 1942 document signed by Stalin, he indicated that several of the minority groups not only aided the enemy but were also looking to revolt against the Soviet government. The

region he eyed specifically was Krasnodar Krai, a territory bordering modern-day Ukraine, where a large minority of Pontians lived. Some of these Pontians were native born descendants of the original colony founded in the BCEs. Others were earlier transplants, having left the Pontus to settle in Russia during the reign of Catherine the Great.²³ Many others were refugees who had recently escaped Türkiye. Fearful of these minorities, Stalin dubbed them “socially dangerous” and potential enemies of the state. He also declared that they would be “subject to eviction by administrative procedure” and for their treason they would face “retribution.”²⁴ Despite Stalin’s aggressive attention in prose, it is unlikely that the Pontians or any other minority were deported by the Soviets at this time. This did not mean that they were safe from scrutiny. Even as the Germans were repelled across the Eastern Front, the minority groups of the Black Sea were still on Soviet minds.

In May of 1944, Beria cited that many of the ethnic groups residing in and around Crimea were also involved with assisting the Germans by providing the invaders housing, food, and information.²⁵ Cited specifically were the Tatars, Bulgarians, Volga Germans, and the Greeks. Notably, at this time, the Pontians of the USSR were not treated as a distinct group. In this and subsequent documents, all minorities of Greek ethnic and linguistic origin, regardless of national affiliation (e.g., from Türkiye, Greece, Iran, or elsewhere), were simply referred to as Greki. As Beria drew lines and calculated costs, he notified Stalin that the deportations were of prime importance. Turn-around time was quick, as not even a week later Stalin issued the first of many deportation orders.

Stalin and Beria’s justifications for the deportations range from military to social. Both the 1942 and 1944 documents were intended to enact legislation to protect regions around the Black Sea from insurrection. Tied into these concerns, however, were infrastructure-based concerns for the development of the USSR’s peripheral zones were cited. They were not political prisoners, nor were they criminals. They were *suspected* of aiding the enemy; thus, they could be put to work outside of the gulag system. Evidence for this argument could be seen in the placement of these deportees in specific regions. The Soviets sent the Pontians to the wide steppes of Central Asia to work on communes and farms. These Greki, along with other minorities such as the Bulgarians, Volga Germans, and Tatars, were given the status of ‘special settler.’ On paper, they were allowed a short time to sell their things before the Soviet state deported them to Central Asia. Loaded by the NKVD into cattle cars, the Pontian Greeks were forcibly relocated from the shores of the Black Sea and the Ararat highlands to the eastern Caspian coast and the Altai Mountains.²⁶

From 1944 to 1949, the deportation of the Pontians, *émigrés* from abroad, and other non-Russian minorities occurred in waves. A portion of this last group consisted of communists, deportees from Greece who had been on the losing side of the Greek Civil War, which ended in 1949. These communist Greeks, headed by Nikos Zachariadis, made their way to Tashkent, where they reestablished their party headquarters. It is important to note that these communist Greeks, though included in the census numbers as part of the Russian Greek minority, were not part of the same community as the Pontians. While there may have been cross-integration, the available public record does not provide substantial evidence that the Zachariadians and the Pontians formed a joint community. This is proved by how the Zachariadians were treated on their arrival in Central Asia. Stalin’s officers referred to them as “political emigrants” who were even asked if they liked their new home in Tashkent.²⁷

The distinction between these two communities can be seen even to this day. While no written records could be found, visual documentation shows clear differences in clothing between the Greek minority communities in Tashkent and the Pontian communities in places like Almaty and Talas. The Tashkent diaspora tends to wear a neutral, Greek state-sponsored cultural folk costume. By contrast, communities in Almaty and Talas wear clothing that reflects Pontian and Lazi traditions. This divergence in dress reflects the persistence of Pontian culture even after deportation. These differences aside, nearly eighty thousand Greeks, Pontian or otherwise, were forcibly relocated by the end of the Stalin era deportation cycles.²⁸

It is important to recognize that not all the Pontians were deported from the southern republics. Villages such as Vitiazevo and Gaverdovskii continued to have Greek populations before, during, and after the deportation cycles.²⁹ Some Pontians had settled outside of northeastern Türkiye as early as the late 1800s, having been granted land in Russia by various *tsars* and *tsarinas*.³⁰ These Pontians had escaped persecution by means of being Russian

citizens and not recent deportees from the Trebizond region. This is further corroborated by Soviet documents, which reveal that deportation orders were specifically targeted at individuals with “expired national Turkish, Greek, and Iranian passports.”³¹

Despite facing exploitation and discrimination, these Pontians preserved their communities, albeit with less enthusiasm. Their regional identity as Pontians was called into question by local communities. Even after the death of Stalin, the Pontians remained a self-identified ethnic minority within the Soviet Union, hesitant to openly embrace their cultural traditions. In an interview, Georgii recounted how he reminded his brethren that to practice “being Greek” in the open would possibly invite unnecessary attention and possible retaliation. For Georgii, it was important that the Pontian Greeks did not cause “a repetition of 1937.”³²

The state-sponsored deportations of the Stalin era received very little coverage outside of the USSR. The Greek state, as the primary stakeholder, might have been expected to take an interest. However, due to consecutive wars, Greece provided little to no assistance to the Pontians during these years. English-language publications, particularly in countries with established Greek diasporas, such as the United States and Great Britain, were somewhat more likely to report on the deportations. Even in these countries, though, coverage remained sparse. Extensive archival research yielded only a handful of relevant publications, underscoring the broader neglect of this issue in historical reporting.

Among the few publications that did cover these deportations, reports varied in accuracy and depth. In one 1949 article from *The Times* of London, the Pontians of Georgia were incorrectly referred to as “Greek nationals” and were reported to have been deported to Kazakhstan by Stalin.³³ Similarly, an American publication released just five days later expanded on these reports. The *Los Angeles Times* article, which aligned more closely with Soviet documents, offered additional insights into the conditions of deportation, including the use of cattle cars (like those of the Asian Minor catastrophe or the Holocaust) and the proximity to the Semipalatinsk nuclear testing site.³⁴

None of the above reports, however, speaks to the acceptance that the Pontians received from their new Central Asian hosts. In an interview with Panagiotis Xanthopoulos, a Pontian born in Abkhazia but deported shortly after, he recalled his childhood growing up in Kazakhstan: “If we didn’t have the support of the Kazakhs, this hospitable and kind people, we would probably have lost most of the exiled population.”³⁵ The aforementioned news reports also do not speak to the relative speed at which the Pontians integrated into Central Asian life. By 1955 there were already major Pontian towns, such as Kentau in Kazakhstan, complete with Greco-inspired architecture and paint, as well as driving communities in places like Astana, Bishkek, Osh, Talas, and Talgar.

Later reports, such as those from *The Times* of London in 1956 and 1963, shifted focus from general coverage of the deportation to more specific individuals. While the 1956 report mentions that the deported Greeks were of interest to the Greek state, the 1963 report presents a more detailed and personal account. The article concerns a Greek protester in Moscow, who was stated to be from “a prewar Greek community living in Kazakhstan” possessed a Greek passport and desired to return to Greece.³⁶ *The Times* also stated that this Greek was part of the community that deliberately distanced themselves from communist ideology. This article likely indicates that the Greeks mentioned in the 1963 report were not the same individuals who migrated to Tashkent with the Greek Communists during the earlier phase of Soviet repression. The article concludes by mentioning efforts to repatriate these Greeks to their homeland and the Soviet opposition to such efforts. These reports predicted the struggles that Central Asian Greeks would face in their efforts to return to the “motherland,” many of which had varying degrees of success.

The return to the “motherland” became a possibility in 1989 when the Soviet government eased restrictions on travel. This shift also included the newfound freedom of movement. From 1988 to 1989 alone, the number of individuals moving to Greece on repatriation visas granted by Athens increased almost tenfold.³⁷ For many Greeks, these visas meant a permanent return to Greece itself. However, for the Pontians of the Black Sea, the liberalization of movement also meant ease in returning to their villages in the southern republics. Regions like Karabakh, Tbilisi, and Krasnodar Krai represented home for the Pontians, most of whom returned and rehabilitated their

communities in these ancestral lands. These migration patterns were further increased just two years later, with the dissolution of the USSR in 1991.³⁸

This, however, would come to represent an emotional conflict for the Pontians as they questioned their identity. Were they Russians or were they Greeks? This question persisted even after a majority of the Pontians left Central Asia. The migration statistics from 1988 to 1989 were not an anomaly; they reflected a rapid influx of Pontians and Russian Greeks, with over 15,000 individuals migrating to Greece every year until 1993. Among them were many from the villages of Vitiazevo and Gaverdovskii, who, feeling a pull toward the land of their distant ancestors, sought opportunities in Greece. Konstantin, a Pontian from Vitiazevo, explained his decision for migration rather simply: "I wanted to work."³⁹ In his pursuit of employment, he joined the Greek Army, as it was the quickest path to acquiring a Greek passport. This act, in many ways, symbolized the cycle of Greeks traveling from the "homeland" to abroad and back again.

For many, the return to Greece would be marred by the same struggles endured by any other immigrant. In an interview with a mother and son pair from Vitiazevo, they were asked if they preferred it in Greece.⁴⁰ The pair had different answers; the mother said "yes" and the son said "no." This conversation hints at the traditional difficulty for immigrants to find comparative work from their home country to their new residence. The reasons for this problem were ageism, gender, cultural expectations, and vocational status. When asked if she worked, she responded negatively. She had already met the age for pension, and by Greek standards, she would merely need to take care of the home.⁴¹ The son, however, was of working age. When initially asked why he said "no," he simply explained that he preferred Vitiazevo. When asked a more leading question about his employment, he talked disparagingly about the working-class job that he possessed in Greece, cleaning trucks, although he had been a jeweler in Russia.

Outside of the vocational sphere, the status of Pontians in Greece is contested in several areas. Legally speaking, the Greek government referred to the Pontians as immigrants when assigning them visas.⁴² Although this is an improvement over refugee status, the terminology still positions them as foreigners or outsiders. The repatriation board's commitment to this "improvement" was challenged by Eftihia Voutira in her 1991 study on the Pontian Greeks.⁴³ By comparing the differing groups of Pontians, who were affected by the Stalinist deportations, Voutira offers an anthropological explanation that some of these individuals can still be considered refugees. This status does not consider the subjective nature of their migration, but rather the objective nature of their history and pattern of uprooting.

To further complicate the Pontian pattern of uprooting, there is also the issue of assimilation, or rather, its absence. As laid out by the interviews conducted by both Voutira and Popov, Pontians face challenges assimilating into the Greek national-social-identity. Dimitris Kokkinos, speaking on behalf of the government, acknowledges this issue, saying, "their integration into the community is slow." However, in the same article, he jokes about this integration stating, "and then the[y] complaint (sic) that the state does nothing for them, by which time we know they have integrated and become a part of us."⁴⁴ The entire framing of the Pontians in Greek society hinges on that last word, "us." As stated by Voutira, in anthropological studies there is the idea of "we-they" or more interpretively "us-them."⁴⁵ The subjective nature of culture, particularly the distinction between Hellenic (as in a Hellene, or person from Greece) Greek, and Pontian identity, forced Pontian Greeks to reevaluate their sense of self. In Popov's book, an interview with a Pontian named Konstantin illustrates this struggle.⁴⁶ In this interview, he states, "I considered myself Greek [before I came to Greece]. [In Greece] I came to understand that I am a Pontian."⁴⁷

The concept of a homeland is subjective. Often one's homeland is assumed to be synonymous with one's *nation* of origin. The nation, however, as argued by Benedict Anderson, "is an *imagined community*, or rather a community that is not inherent but self-created."⁴⁸ Under this definition, the homeland, the motherland, *patria*, or any other derivative, is a construct of the love for the nation placed at the intersectionality of linguistics and culture.⁴⁹ This is further corroborated in more modern interpretations. As argued by Harris Mylonas and Maya Tudor, the nation is a place constructed through social identity and pragmatic sensibilities.⁵⁰ Using their definition, the "nation" is a *modernist* nationalistic idea, born from a desire by either a nation's people or their government to coalesce a group into a single identifiable construct identified by a shared linguistic, cultural, and idealistic background. For

individuals of a diaspora, however, the idea of home and thus homeland becomes removed from a nation. This is particularly true with the modern-day ability to be a dual citizen, thereby accepting a dual identity. As is the case for many Pontians, or any other immigrant group, citizens may accept a passport from one country but still recognize another as their homeland.

Therefore, by keeping their dual identity, the linguistic and cultural requirements for *modernist nationalism* become lost in Greece. This nationalism means that, as Greece intends to have a unifying *Greek-Hellenic* identity, all citizens or immigrants must change their identity to conform. As Pontian identity is predicated on homeland and language, their ability to become Grecian hinges on individual conformity. This disparate identity was what the Pontians realized after the Greek state relegated them to refugee status, and after many of the people in Greece referred to them as Russian immigrants or “Soviet Greeks.” This conflict of ideology becomes clearer when specific examples of the diaspora are examined. One of these Pontians, the elder Mama Elena, was interviewed in 2012 by the Azzytyk news publication. As one of the last of the Pontians still in Kyrgyzstan, reporters were interested in her story. What she said provided a glimpse into the idea of a constructed home. When asked why she had not left Osh, the second biggest city in Kyrgyzstan, even after all her friends and even much of her family had left, she replied that she had been in Kyrgyzstan for almost seventy years. This was punctuated by her closing words, “We lived well [here] - we drank water from the same ditch, ate bread from the same tandoor. We got along well, like brothers.”⁵¹

Even if some Pontians make the return, they still find themselves conflicted. Another Kyrgyz-Pontian, Giorgios Vasiliadas, accepted the Greek repatriation visa opportunity in the 90s, moving to Greece out of necessity as he followed his extended family unit. Yet, when interviewed in 2013, after over twenty years of living in Greece, he expressed nothing but love and patriotism for his country of origin. He said, “I was born in the village of Beisheke in Talas ... I miss my hometown ... Although it says “Greek” on my passport, my heart beats “Kyrgyzstan.””⁵² Mama Elena and Giorgios are not the only individuals from the Kyrgyz branch of the diaspora to reflect on their shared sense of homeland. Nor are they the only segment of the Central Asian diaspora to be so patriotic. Pontian patriotism or love of homeland is not unique to the Kyrgyz branch; it is a wide sweeping phenomenon.

One such example of patriotic Pontians comes from the diaspora living in Greece. While much of the academic coverage, including this study, covers how Pontians define themselves as fundamentally different from the Greek national identity, there are still those who claim Greece as their homeland. One example is Athena Pavlidis, grandmother of mixed martial artist Christos Navrozidis. In a larger video concerning Christos, Athena was interviewed as the “soul” of the family. When asked why she came to Greece, she said, “We came to Greece. We came to our homeland, for our children to grow up here in the homeland.”⁵³ After his grandmother finished speaking, Christos added, “This [Pontian] is a label that they [Greek citizens] gave us. In reality we are all patriots, we know we are Greeks.”⁵⁴ Present for this same interview was Christos’s mother, who remarked “I tell them I am Greek. On the face of our passport, it says Greek. So then why are they calling us Russians?”⁵⁵ However, when Christos is separated from his family, he has a different interpretation of his Pontian roots. When interviewed while driving his truck, he said, “I am a Pontic Greek, from the Pontos, a refugee. Both my mother and my father were refugees.”⁵⁶ Motioning up to the symbol of the Pontian eagle AEK hanging from his dashboard, he said, “To me AEK represents the homelands ... the people ... the memories that we lost.”

This idea of refugees and memories is similarly shared by the other Asia Minor Greeks. For those who live on the island of Lesbos, the memory is represented in daily life, via community awareness and cultural events. However, as it was with Christos, the memory is more strongly carried by the second and third generations. When interviewed by Marilena Anastasopoulou, a historian of modern migration studies from Oxford, several of the Greeks of Lesbos recounted how the modern-day Syrian refugee crisis was similar to theirs. One second-generation refugee (who remains nameless) stated, “We are reminded every time we see refugees landing on the island’s shores of the scenes of exodus our mothers had described. We too were refugees.”⁵⁷

Patriotic Pontians, therefore, point towards one idea: that Pontians create a home where they are accepted. This is true of many other diasporas, but for the Pontians, this idea of created home hinges on that acceptance. For Mama Elena and Giorgios, who the Kyrgyz accepted, their homeland was a natural choice. For Athena, her

strong desire to raise her children and grandchildren as Pontic-Greeks defied anyone who would say otherwise. The Pontians are resilient; they are a people who build homelands. But while Mama Elena, Giorgios, Christos, and the Greeks of Lesbos show us what a Pontian can do when accepted, there are times when acceptance is not always available. If home cannot be created where the Pontians are, they leave, returning to their point of origin. This act of returning to that point of origin is called Counter-Diaspora. Russell King and Anastasia Christou regard counter-diaspora as the return of the second generation to their ancestral homeland. While in their studies, it was German and American Greeks migrating back to Greece, and the same theoretical lens can be applied to the Pontians returning home to the southern republics of Russia, Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan.

Christou and King were not the only theorists examining migration loops. Another theorist whose research bolsters the counter-migration theory is Eftihia Voutira, who provided a discursive interpretation to this problem via the differences between the “refugee” Pontians and the “immigrant” Pontians. The “immigrant” camp of Pontians were those who refused to sever ties to their native lands.⁵⁸ For Popov, this would be the villagers from Vitiazevo and Gaverdovskii who lost much of their sense of self and economies from migrating to Greece. As they returned, they reestablished their presence in their original villages, which had stood in the same spot since the BCEs. While this could be interpreted by some readers as a loss, counter-migration was not, and is not, entirely detrimental.

As Pontian counter-migration loops back to their homes in the Caucasus, they took back with them the art and culture of mainland Greece, reforging their Pontian identities with just a bit more Greek charm. This “Pontic globalization,” as it was referred to in one interview, allows the Pontians to reshape themselves in their own image, and, in turn, reflects the sociological concept of cultural formation. These patterns of cultural formation should be analyzed to understand how Pontian identity is formed from within. Scholars should evaluate all cultures within their own context. This is the core philosophy behind Franz Boas’s theory of methodological cultural relativism.⁵⁹ Boas expanded on these ideas in his work *The Mind of Primitive Man* to posit that the “mind” (that is “understanding”) and culture of one worldview is contingent on the built experiences and context of that culture.⁶⁰ This methodology sets the groundwork for ethical relativism as it forces one to reevaluate the biases within one’s own culture prior to conducting their academic studies. Boasianism as a school of thought experienced a revival and was reinterpreted by anthropologists Ira Bashkow and Matti Bunzl through Neo-Boasianism. This new theoretical framework espoused that an individual’s culture can/will be influenced by factors outside of said culture’s original purview.⁶¹ Anton Popov reiterated these ideas through his phrasing, “a culture is considered unique when people outside the group and people inside the group believe it to be so.”⁶² Focusing on the words “inside,” “outside,” and “believe,” this paper has shown that the Pontians can be considered a distinct cultural group within a broader Greek identity.

Through the discursive elements discussed, this paper also shows that this idea can be applied to ethnicity. It is true that when the Pontians arrived in Russia they were considered Greek. However, that line of thinking supposes that there is one *Greek* identity rather than a broad *Hellenic* one. Some *Greeks* in *Greece* reinforced this when the Pontians were referred to as “Russian” or “Soviet Greek.” This forced the Pontians to reevaluate their own sense of identity after 2600 years of cultural continuity. Despite originally hailing from the lands now known as Greece, the Pontians are distinctly Pontian; a *Hellenized* people who share ancient customs and some cultural identity with modern *Greek* people, but whose identity was shaped in their own homeland of the Pontus. All three stages of Boasian theoretical ideology support this, as it evaluates Pontian identity on *its own* merits, examines the internal and external influences on the culture (Greek identity, developed Pontian identity, assumed nationality), and understands how people both outside and within the Pontian community construct its separation from other cultural identities.

Pontian culture originated from the Black Sea, away from Greece itself. This may defy scholarly or even political expectations as even now the Pontians are called a *Greek* people. Yet, by the definition of their own patriarch, as well as what has been revealed by their counter-migration and lack of assimilation in their host countries, the Pontian people are better categorized as a *Hellenic* people. This may imply that the Pontians were *Hellenized*, which brings up a paradox, that being if they were *Hellenized*, then they must be *Greek*. Harvard Hellenic historian Glen

Bowersock disagrees with this notion. He writes that *Hellenization* or the act of becoming *Hellenic* is, “A useless barometer” as it supposes that *Hellenic must equal Greek*.⁶³ Instead he posits that Hellenism is a layered cultural interpretation of Greek practices unto another culture. Therefore, a Pontian can be *Hellenic* but not *Greek*, for while there may be cultural overlap, the supposition that they are the same does not stick.

This non-Grecian *Hellenic* categorization provides a conundrum. If a *Hellenic* people do not belong to Greece and cannot go back to the Pontos, then where are they supposed to go? For Pontians from the coasts of the Black Sea, home is in the former USSR. Returning to lands where there are already roots means returning to grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends who share a linguistic and cultural system secured by generations. But then what about the Pontians in Central Asia, the diasporas of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan? These people have not only refused to return to Greece; they have refused to return to the Black Sea. This seems contrarian to the idea of an original Pontian homeland. But the difference with this portion of the diaspora was the level of historical acceptance. The Central Asian republics welcomed the Pontians as guests, and over time, this status changed as Pontians built themselves a new home. Therefore, while the Black Sea represents the original Pontian homeland, the villages and mountains of Central Asia are also home.

The Central Asian experience demonstrates that the concept of a true homeland in the modern day is subjective. While people may use the interpretations of their unified nation state to justify homeland, those whose cultural belonging is separate from that idea will reject it. In the case of the Pontians, this rejection took shape in developing a distinct cultural identity separate from the historical Greek one. The Pontians challenged the notion of a single *Greek-Hellenic* heritage and the assumption that they must be ruled by their *own* people i.e., Greece⁶⁴ While people can historically come from a place, their ethno-cultural values are more determined by new geographical locations, linguistic differences, desire for autonomy and the development of a distinct background. Calls can be made by the historical motherland to return. But when people make this return, they may find that this is not their true home.

Home is where their family is, where their people are, where their ancestors are buried; it is where they find job security, housing, and cultural ties that make them feel welcome.

Simply put, home is where they are most comfortable. The interview subject Konstantin underscores this sentiment when he says, “When I went [to Greece], I thought ‘Ah, the Homeland! I’ve arrived. Let’s shout about the Homeland, we like it even if it is not beautiful. So, we left [Russia], we got to know what the world [Greece] is like, got to know that there is nothing better than home [Russia].”⁶⁵

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BREAKING THE WILL TO RESIST: SHERMAN'S 1864–65 CAMPAIGNS AND THE MAKING OF MODERN WARFARE

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Abstract: This paper argues that William T. Sherman's 1864–65 Georgia and Carolinas campaigns represented a decisive shift in Union strategy toward “hard war”: the systematic destruction of railroads, crops, and communications to undermine Confederate logistics and civilian morale. While not total war in the twentieth-century sense, Sherman's approach departed from conventional mid-nineteenth-century tactics and operated as a transitional form of warfare. Drawing on Sherman's memoirs, orders, and correspondence, as well as Union soldiers' letters and diaries and Southern civilian testimony, the study shows how foraging, attacks on infrastructure, and the burning of Columbia resulted in a chaotic blend of strategic design and the unpredictable realities of war. It finds that Sherman broadened legitimate targets to include civilian resources and morale while maintaining limits against intentional harm to noncombatants. The paper concludes that these campaigns functioned as proto-total war and influenced later U.S. thinking about logistics and coercion.

On a cold December morning in 1864, Union soldiers approached the outskirts of Savannah, Georgia. Behind them stretched a path of destruction from Atlanta to the sea. Barns burned to the ground, telegraph wires were ripped from poles, and miles of railroad track had been heated and twisted around trees into mangled iron. In the wake of the march, Confederate resistance had completely collapsed. Farmers who once supported the war now faced empty granaries. African Americans walked beside blue-coated troops, free, but uncertain of where to go.¹ This devastation was the reality of war under General William T. Sherman, one of the most effective and polarizing military leaders in American history. From November 1864 to the end of the Civil War in April of 1865, Sherman's forces executed a bold series of campaigns that destroyed Confederate infrastructure and greatly accelerated the collapse of the Southern war effort. As the Union tightened its grip and the Confederacy faltered, Sherman redefined what Union victory required: the destruction of the South's will to resist.²

This paper examines Sherman's 1864 and 1865 campaigns, primarily the Georgia campaign, popularly known as Sherman's March to the Sea, or the march. It treats the campaigns as a turning point in the Union's military strategy and as a moment of transformation in the history of American warfare. This study argues that Sherman's campaigns did not constitute “total war” in the twentieth-century sense; his tactics and leadership pioneered a harsher form of “hard” warfare that expanded the range of legitimate targets to include civilian infrastructure and resources, representing a significant shift in how American armies operated in wartime.

This paper focuses on Sherman's Atlanta to Savannah campaign in late 1864, as well as the Carolina campaign that followed. The methodology involves a detailed examination of both primary and secondary sources, including analyzing Sherman's own writings to understand his justifications for his strategy, comparing Union soldiers' accounts with Southern civilian diaries to assess the impact and perception of the campaigns, and evaluating secondary scholarship to contextualize these events within debates over “hard war,” total war, and the evolution of modern military strategy. Central to the analysis is Sherman's own writings, particularly his memoirs, in which he defends his actions on moral and strategic grounds.³ The letters and diaries of Union soldiers offer firsthand views of how the campaign unfolded on the ground. Southern civilians, including writers like Jane Evans Elliot, provide insights into how Sherman's policies were perceived by those on the receiving end of the destruction. Among the secondary sources are Mark Grimsley's *The Hard Hand of War*, which argues that the Union's approach evolved from conciliatory to destructive over the course of the war, and Charles Royster's *The Destructive War*, which examines Sherman's mindset and tactics. Works by Eric Foner, Drew Gilpin Faust, and James McPherson also provide perspectives on wartime perception, memory, and the role of civilians in Civil War strategy.

Building on previous scholarship, this study interprets Sherman's campaigns as a hybrid form of warfare that blended nineteenth-century limitations with modern strategic thinking. Earlier scholarship typically frames Sherman as either an innovator, crediting him with inventing total war, or a destroyer whose campaigns aimed at punishing the South rather than achieving military objectives. This paper positions his campaigns as a transitional

model, one that redefined the relationship between civilian morale, infrastructure, and military success while stopping short of the full total-war practices of the twentieth century. In doing so, it contributes to ongoing debates about how to conceptualize Civil War violence, how to distinguish “hard war” from “total war,” and how shifting historiography has shaped interpretations of Sherman’s legacy.

The paper begins by defining the concept of total war, placing it within its theoretical and historical context by examining how scholars have traced its intellectual origins, how it emerged from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European state-building, and how the term has been applied inaccurately to earlier conflicts. This first section asks how total war has been defined by military historians and whether the Civil War, and Sherman’s leadership in particular, fits that model. It then traces the evolution of tactics associated with total war through American conflicts. The second section examines Sherman’s strategy in detail, investigating his background, military philosophy, and operational goals. This section focuses on what Sherman hoped to achieve both militarily and psychologically, and how his tactics marked a shift from more traditional modes of warfare.

Sections three and four focus on the ground-level impact of Sherman’s actions. They examine the extent of the material destruction during the March to the Sea and the following Carolinas campaign. These sections draw on primary testimony to understand how civilians and soldiers experienced the campaigns. This part of the paper also addresses the ethical debates around Sherman’s orders. Section five considers the changing nature of warfare and the long-term implications of Sherman’s tactics. It explores whether his approach influenced later military doctrine and whether it anticipated the strategies used in twentieth-century total wars. Section six reviews how historians have interpreted Sherman and his tactics over time, from contemporary reactions to modern reassessments.

This paper argues that Sherman’s actions, commonly referred to as “hard war” were a form of proto-total war and that his strategies marked a turning point in how Americans conducted warfare. Sherman transformed the nature of war through the destruction of infrastructure, the disruption of supplies, the undermining of civilian morale, and the treatment of the Southern home front as a strategic resource. Future Scholarship on Sherman should acknowledge his strategic advancements without over crediting him as the inventor of total war. To assess whether Sherman’s campaigns approached “total war,” it is first necessary to define the concept itself and trace its emergence within nineteenth-century European warfare.

The concept of total war developed gradually from late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European warfare. The French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars introduced systematic mobilization of entire populations, which linked military service to national identity and ideology.⁴ Napoleon’s armies demonstrated that victory depended on a nation’s economic endurance and morale as well as battlefield victories. The scale of these conflicts demanded unprecedented social commitment: in some regions of Europe, such as France, between five and ten percent of adult men were killed; a level of loss that emphasizes how deeply entire societies were reorganized around sustaining war.⁵ These casualty rates reveal that the boundaries between civilian life and military necessity were already eroding long before the twentieth century. Later in the century, the wars of German unification deepened this logic through railroads, telegraphs, and industrial logistics, showing how technology could extend the state’s capacity to wage continuous, organized destruction.⁶

Modern military theorists use the term “total war” to describe conflicts in which states mobilize all available economic, political, and social resources and remove the boundaries that separate combatants from civilians. The phrase in its modern usage was first used by German general Erich Ludendorff in his 1936 work *The Nation at War*, in which he argued that modern conflict required,

A people strong spiritually and physically, capable over months and years of an extreme sustained effort against an enemy, to break his will and brave all hardships at the Front and behind it, yea, even in the hands of the enemy; which takes account of every menacing danger, which remains strong amid doubts and the uncertainties inseparable from a long war. The Total War is remorseless. It demands the last ounce of man and woman.⁷

Ludendorff's conception of war as the total mobilization of an entire society became foundational to twentieth-century military doctrine and found echoes in conflicts far from Europe. American commanders were already experimenting with similar principles well before the Civil War.

American warfare followed European military innovation with a parallel trajectory of increasing violence and civilian involvement. In 1847, during the Mexican-American War, General Winfield Scott attempted several new strategies that Sherman later refined. Scott's innovative siege of Veracruz revealed a new willingness to target civilian morale.⁸ Scott bombarded the city for weeks, intentionally targeting civilian dwellings and military emplacements alike. As one naval historian put it, "The town and its inhabitants had suffered heavily from the pounding of the army's heavy mortars and howitzers." This attack killed or wounded hundreds of civilians while putting few American lives at risk.⁹ The destruction and terror quickly forced the city to surrender. Scott justified the attack as a military necessity, but the siege demonstrated that the United States recognized the psychological utility of civilian suffering as a weapon of war.¹⁰

Scott then decided to sever his supply lines entirely and force his army to live off the Mexican countryside. This previewed the logistical methods Sherman would later refine into. For most nineteenth-century armies, supply lines were their lifeline; cutting loose from them risked starvation, isolation, and easy destruction if anything went wrong. Commanders typically stayed tethered to depots and railheads because the logistical burden of feeding thousands of men and animals made independent movement extremely difficult. Without the necessary supplies to feed his troops, Scott's army was required to steal and forage from the local population, and while militarily effective, these tactics came at the cost of civilian suffering. The strategies pioneered by Scott influenced future generals like Sherman and resurfaced during the Civil War two decades later.¹¹

Understanding the strategic logic of Sherman's March requires examining his professional background and military philosophy. William Tecumseh Sherman graduated from West Point in 1840 and served in several frontier and administrative posts before the Civil War. Unlike many of his peers, he had limited combat experience but a strong grounding in logistics and engineering. These skills shaped his later emphasis on supply, infrastructure, and movement. Sherman was also deeply pessimistic about war, believing it to be inherently brutal and socially destructive rather than glorious. This outlook set him apart from many officers who still viewed warfare as honorable.

Sherman, like most generals at the time, believed that Southern civilians were mostly loyal Americans led by a rogue government. This caused him to be gentler when giving orders affecting civilians. Yet as the war continued, and he interacted with more Southerners, he changed his mind. He found most were ardent in their beliefs and that they hated him, his men, and his country. In a letter, Sherman said, "We are not only fighting hostile armies, but a hostile people, and must make old and young, rich and poor, feel the hard hand of war, as well as their organized armies."¹² Sherman's shift to increasingly "hard" tactics occurred alongside his evolving belief that White Southerners were no longer Americans misled by their leaders, but traitors who forfeited their claim to leniency.

Sherman's objective in the fall of 1864 was to hasten the end of the war by breaking the South's will to fight, but his mission came with an additional burden.¹³ The presidential election of 1864 was quickly approaching, and Lincoln's prospects were slim. A string of losses had weakened Northern morale; enlistments were declining, and Lincoln himself believed he would lose the election.¹⁴ Many Northerners were growing weary of the conflict as newspapers printed long casualty lists week after week, reinforcing the sense that the war had become a grinding stalemate. This erosion of civilian confidence mirrored the Confederacy's own dependence on morale, making it clear that the psychological resolve of populations on both sides was as crucial as battlefield victories. A Democratic victory, especially under George B. McClellan, who ran on a platform calling for negotiations with the Confederacy, threatened to end the war with slavery intact and the Union divided.¹⁵

Sherman's understanding of the political crisis at hand, especially the election, heavily influenced his actions in 1864. In his diary, Sherman wrote: "Success to our arms at that instant was therefore a political necessity; and it was all-important that something startling in our interest should occur before the election in November. The brilliant success at Atlanta filled that requirement and made the election of Mr. Lincoln certain."¹⁶ Atlanta's fall

electrified the North, revived confidence in Lincoln, and dealt a psychological blow to the Confederacy. Likely, Sherman would not have acted aggressively if he had not motivated by the 1864 election. After securing Atlanta, Lincoln went on to win the election of 1864 in a landslide.

After capturing Atlanta, Sherman made the bold and rare decision to break away from his supply lines and march through Georgia to the sea. Cutting loose from his logistical base echoed the strategy of Winfield Scott's earlier campaign during the Mexican American War. For Sherman, however, the push south away from his supply line was the next phase in using destruction to force the collapse of the Confederacy.¹⁷ Sherman innovated Scott's strategy by obscuring his movements. He marched his troops toward multiple predictable targets before pivoting suddenly at the last moment, keeping Confederate forces off balance. An example of this tactic occurred when Sherman initially moved his columns as though he intended to strike Augusta, a major Confederate munitions center. Confederate generals scrambled to defend the city, only for Sherman to pivot away and steer his forces toward Milledgeville and ultimately Savannah. His feint kept Confederate troops dispersed and unable to mount an effective defense. This strategy exposed his men to immense risk, having to spread out, but freed the army from the slow, vulnerable movements other Union campaigns suffered from.

Sherman believed that striking deep into the Confederate interior would expose the South's inability to defend its own heartland and shatter civilian morale more effectively than battlefield victories alone. Writing during the campaign, he argued that it was "a material element in this campaign to produce among the people of Georgia a thorough conviction of the personal misery which attends war, and of the utter helplessness and inability of their 'rulers,' State or Confederate, to protect them."¹⁸ By making suffering visible and unavoidable, Sherman forced civilians to confront the cost of continued resistance. As he later explained to Grant, his goal was "to make Georgia howl," his famous phrase captured his intention to wage psychological warfare as well as military conquest.¹⁹ By burning depots and confiscating food and livestock, Sherman crippled Confederate logistics and crushed civilian morale. His strategy was calculated to deprive the enemy of the means and the will to continue resistance. His unique mixture of tactics and violence formed into what he called "the hard hand of war."²⁰

Without the supply lines that contemporary armies relied on to survive, Sherman's forces required a radically different logistical approach. The army sustained itself almost entirely on Confederate resources. Around the core column of men moved foraging parties known as "bummers." Their intended purpose was to seize food, livestock, and supplies necessary to keep the army in motion. On Sherman's orders, these units fanned out across the countryside, identified targets, and returned to the main column with the resources needed to sustain thousands of men each day.

This system turned Georgia itself into Sherman's supply line, allowing his army to maintain a fast pace while stripping the Confederacy, and its civilians, of the material basis of resistance. Sherman once again innovated an existing strategy by using the United States 1860 census to estimate county-by-county food production. He identified which regions could sustain his troops and which routes would yield the greatest logistical and psychological impact.²¹ This use of intelligence and resource gathering was strikingly modern for a nineteenth-century commander. The bummer system enabled Sherman to cut deep into enemy territory without supply depots, rail lines, or a communications hub.

Sherman's correspondence reveals that he understood the campaigns' psychological and political value as clearly as its military utility. Having demonstrated at Atlanta that destruction could reshape public opinion and revive Northern morale, he now sought to prove that the Confederacy could not defend its own civilians. If Georgians saw Union forces moving unopposed through the heart of their state, he believed their faith in eventual victory would collapse. Historian William McNeill notes that "the Union commander wished to destroy the indestructible image of the Confederacy, which most Southerners had conceived in their minds."²² The March to the Sea would accomplish this goal several times over. Sherman conceived the campaign as political theater as well as a military operation. In his memoirs, he states that "I was strongly inspired with the feeling that the movement on our part was a direct attack upon the rebel army and the rebel capital at Richmond, though a full thousand miles of

hostile country intervened, and that for better or worse, it would end the war.”²³ This statement reflected his belief that attacks on the mind were just as effective as physical attacks on soldiers and cities.

The deeper Sherman pushed into Confederate territory, the more his army became a magnet for thousands of formerly enslaved people seeking freedom, forcing him to confront a humanitarian crisis that his hard war strategy had never accounted for. The deeper his forces pushed into Southern territory, the more formerly enslaved people fled to Union lines and followed the army. Thousands of newly liberated African Americans, uncertain of where to go next, sought protection within the Union column.²⁴ Their numbers grew rapidly, and with them grew the burden on Sherman’s troops. These families needed food and shelter; yet they trailed behind an army designed to move swiftly and live off the land. Sherman became increasingly frustrated, viewing the expanding refugee population as a threat to his army’s effectiveness. When Sherman’s army reached Savannah, he was forced to devise a strategic solution to the problem forming in his wake.

Sherman’s response to the refugee crisis revealed the same strategic pragmatism that defined his military operations: Special Field Orders No. 15, the origin of the phrase “forty acres and a mule,” was less a humanitarian gesture than a calculated solution to a logistical problem threatening the efficiency of his campaign.²⁵ The order provisionally granted freedpeople up to forty acres of confiscated Confederate land, along with access to army mules for farming. Sherman issued this directive after meeting with Black ministers and community leaders in Savannah, an extraordinary act for the time.²⁶ They emphasized that without land, freedpeople would never achieve independence or security. Acting on his own authority, Sherman enacted what would become one of the most radical measures of Reconstruction, so radical that President Andrew Johnson later rescinded it. Once more, Sherman’s motivations for such bold innovation were largely strategic.²⁷ The order, taken as a radical act of Reconstruction, was designed to organize the thousands of freedpeople following his army and to prevent them from overwhelming or slowing his continued military operations in the future.

While the Civil War was fought over slavery, Sherman himself was not primarily concerned with the issue. He was not morally opposed to slavery so much as he was determined to crush secession and restore federal authority. He wrote to the mayor and city council of Atlanta in 1864: “We don’t want your negroes, or your horses, or your houses... but we do want and will have a just obedience to the laws of the United States. That we will have, and, if it involves the destruction of your improvements, we cannot help it.”²⁸ This statement reveals that, for Sherman, the war’s moral center was obedience, not emancipation. That belief shaped the orders he gave, his treatment of emancipated African Americans, his expectations for his men, and his justifications for the level of force he unleashed against the South.

Sherman’s 1864–65 campaign reveals a commander whose strategic innovations pushed nineteenth-century warfare toward a harsher form. The fall of Atlanta showed Sherman that brutal destruction delivered tangible results, and the March to the Sea became an extension of that realization. Sherman’s decision to sever his supply lines, exploit census data, and rely on rapid, unpredictable maneuvers, as well as his tactical move to peacefully remove the freedmen from his ranks, shows his unique brilliance as a general. Combined, his tactics formed a unique style of warfare that was effective but costly to the civilians surrounding him.

The March to the Sea left behind a path of destruction unmatched in the American Civil War. Sherman’s army of roughly 60,000 men advanced 300 miles through Georgia, living off the land and systematically dismantling the state’s capacity to support the Confederate war effort. Union soldiers tore up railroads and heated them until they twisted around trees. These useless rails became known as “Sherman’s neckties.” Warehouses, depots, mills, and bridges were burned, and civilian homes frequently caught fire as flames spread beyond their intended targets. Livestock and grain were confiscated or destroyed to deny their use to Confederate forces, leaving civilians with little means of survival. One Union soldier captured the scale and consequences of this destruction in his diary, observing that “where our footsteps pass, fire, ashes, and desolation follow in their path... the sufferings which the people will have to undergo will be most intense,” as Sherman’s army left behind “no provisions which will go any distance in supporting the people.”²⁹ In his own reports, Sherman said the purpose of this devastation was to make the South “feel that war and individual ruin are synonymous terms.”³⁰

The popular image of Sherman's entire army dismantling the South is misleading. Most of Sherman's men spent the march simply marching.³¹ The bulk of the damage came from the "Bummers," small foraging parties sent to gather food from local communities. These scavengers quickly gained a reputation for being unnecessarily violent and destructive. Contemporary accounts indicate that Bummers went well beyond their orders, and looted civilians of personal belongings, not just food.³² One Southern woman, Jane Evans Elliot, described her experience when Bummers entered her town, saying, "a party of raiders rushed in upon our peaceful home. They pillaged and plundered the whole day and quartered upon that night and stayed until 5 o'clock Monday evening... The house was rifled from garret to cellar. Took all our blankets and all clothes, all our silver and knives and forks, all our luxuries, leaving nothing but a little meat and corn."³³ Her account reflects the fear and violence that foraging parties became known across the South.

Sherman framed the destruction in Georgia as strategic rather than vengeful, but its impact on civilians was catastrophic. Towns along the route were stripped of food and supplies. Farms that had sustained families for generations were reduced to ashes. The violence and destruction were often unnecessary and cruel. Another Southern woman, Dolly Lunt Burge, recalled in her diary, "No church. Our preacher's horse stolen by the Yankees... They cruelly shot a George Daniel and a Mr. Jones of Covington, destroyed a great deal of private property, and took many citizens prisoners."³⁴ Plundering became a defining feature of the march, not only among Bummers but across the broader ranks. Union soldiers often ignored official restraints and seized whatever they wanted from civilians. Food, livestock, clothing, and household valuables disappeared as troops passed through, leaving residents with little means of survival. Officers occasionally punished offenders, yet the enormous scale of the campaign made real enforcement impossible. Even when Sherman insisted that only military necessities should be taken, the absence of Confederate resistance and the abundance of opportunity created conditions in which soldiers acted with near impunity. Confederate and Union observers alike described scenes in which homes were emptied of anything valuable, obscuring the boundary between sanctioned foraging and theft. The actions of Bummers and ordinary soldiers alike created a lasting image in the minds of Southerners: Sherman's men were devils who could not be stopped and who inflicted whatever harm they wished.

The most troubling accounts from the march reveal that Sherman's hard war extended into violence his own orders explicitly prohibited, exposing the limits of his authority and the human cost of deploying tens of thousands of men through ungarded territory. Numerous accounts from Georgia and the Carolinas describe beatings, sexual assaults, and even murders committed during foraging operations and the occupation of towns.³⁵ Sherman denied that rapes or deliberate attacks on civilians were common, insisting that only isolated offenders violated his orders. Yet gathered diaries, local reports, and testimony point to a far more troubling reality. The sheer size of the army and the collapse of Confederate authority created an environment where abuse occurred with little consequence. Alcohol, resentment, and the absence of supervision in rural areas heightened the danger for vulnerable civilians, especially women and enslaved people. The violence that did occur reveals the limits of Sherman's control and the human cost of his hard war strategy.

The material losses during the march were staggering, yet the greater destruction was psychological. Sherman's March made it clear that the Confederacy could not protect its own people. The sight of blue-coated troops marching through the heart of Georgia with little opposition shattered the illusion of Confederate strength. For many white Southerners, the march became an apocalyptic event, remembered as an act of deliberate cruelty. Fires lighting the night sky, empty smokehouses, and ruined railways became enduring symbols of humiliation. The campaign blurred the moral boundaries between military necessity and retribution. Sherman did order against the death of civilians, but starvation is inevitable when most of a town's food supply is either requisitioned or destroyed. Due to his military actions, some civilians lived on the brink of starvation. As one soldier wrote, "We have marched through the heart... leaving many a woman and child in a state of starvation."³⁶ The march achieved its strategic aims, but at a steep human cost. The abstract concept of Sherman's "hard war" manifested into a terrible reality for thousands of civilians who experienced the collapse of their world. If Georgia demonstrated the effectiveness of hard war, Sherman's next campaign revealed its most destructive potential.

As Sherman turned his army northward into South Carolina in early 1865, the state that had launched secession faced a campaign that would surpass Georgia in both psychological intent and material destruction. Many Confederates believed the destruction in Georgia had only been a prelude to what awaited the state that had led secession, indeed the worst destruction lay ahead of Sherman in the capital city of Columbia. Sherman chose South Carolina as his next major target primarily for its psychological value as the birthplace of rebellion. Once again, breaking Southern morale ranked higher on his agenda than targeting prime military targets. South Carolina's plantations, towns, and remaining food stores became immediate targets, both for strategic reasons and as symbols of the rebellion's birthplace. Confederate resistance remained scattered and ineffective, allowing Federal forces to push rapidly toward the state capital. By mid-February, Sherman's army closed in on Columbia, a city already strained by refugees, shortages, and panic. What had begun in Georgia as a campaign of crippling the Confederate war effort now entered a new, final phase. South Carolina, more than any other state, would feel the full weight of Sherman's advancing army. By the time Sherman was done, the Civil War was effectively over.

The capture of Columbia unfolded in an atmosphere of chaos and collapsing authority. As Sherman's troops approached the city, Confederate forces fled the city, putting up no defenses. When Union soldiers entered the city, some fires had already been lit by retreating Confederates. As the hours went on, other fires sparked accidentally or deliberately by union troops began to spread through streets crowded with refugees and abandoned supplies. High winds spread the flames until parts of the city were up in flames. Union soldiers, many of whom had discovered stores of Confederate alcohol, became increasingly drunk as the night wore on. Discipline deteriorated rapidly. In the confusion, homes and businesses were looted, women were raped, and terrified civilians fled through smoke-filled streets searching for safety.³⁷ Union officers struggled to assert control over their men as violence surged across the burning city. Reports after the occupation recorded instances of rape, murder, and indiscriminate destruction, with civilians, both Black and White, falling victim to soldiers acting without restraint. Two Federal soldiers who refused to obey orders and joined the lawlessness were summarily shot by their commanding officers on the spot, a stark indication of how desperate the situation had become. The blaze ultimately consumed much of Columbia's commercial district, leaving thousands homeless by morning.

The true cost of Columbia's fall revealed itself not in the fire itself but in the famine and social collapse that followed, demonstrating that Sherman's hard war inflicted its deepest wounds through deprivation rather than direct violence. When the fires died down, and the army moved on, Columbia was left, in the words of Sidney Andrews, a reporter, "a city of desolation, of vacant homes, of widowed women, of deserted warehouses, of weed-wild gardens ... of miles of grass-grown streets."³⁸ The destruction of food stores and infrastructure plunged the city into famine and desperation. William Gilmore Simms, a novelist who lived in Columbia, recalled that "the inhabitants, black no less than white, were left to starve, compelled to feed only upon the garbage to be found in the abandoned camps of the soldiers."³⁹ For residents who lived through it, the fall of the city was inseparable from the deprivation that followed, and Sherman's army became permanently associated with the destruction and social collapse that engulfed South Carolina's capital. These civilian experiences demonstrate the severity and effectiveness of Sherman's campaigns, but their significance extended beyond immediate suffering; his tactics contributed to a transformation in how war itself was conceived and conducted.

Sherman's March fundamentally expanded what the Union considered a legitimate military target, marking a decisive break from the conciliatory policies of the war's early years and accelerating the transition toward total war. Earlier in the conflict, Union commanders, including Sherman himself, distinguished between military and civilian assets, aiming to defeat Confederate armies while leaving private property intact. By late 1864, Sherman, hardened by years of fighting, treated all products of civilian labor as components of the Confederate war machine.⁴⁰ In letters to his subordinates, he emphasized that the South's material base and morale were inseparable from its ability to fight. Destroying one meant destroying the other. This logic expanded the battlefield to include the Southern home front. Sherman argued that sparing the Confederate economy would only prolong the war and increase suffering overall.⁴¹ His choice to justify cruelty to prevent future destruction erodes the moral line between necessity and punishment.

General Sherman's campaigns displayed features that later historians associate with total war, yet they remained rooted in nineteenth-century practice. His army targeted railroads, food stores, workshops, and transportation networks, all basic foundations that sustained Confederate resistance. They also prioritized breaking civilian morale rather than defeating field armies. As stated earlier, Sherman's use of census data to map supply centers and his emphasis on crippling Georgia's ability to support Richmond reflected a modern understanding of war as a struggle of systems. At the same time, the campaign lacked the technological capacity and centralized state that defined full total war in the twentieth century. Sherman could not direct industrial-scale destruction like the strategic bombing of the Second World War, nor could he rely on the kind of tightly controlled mass-mobilized bureaucracies that later regimes used to coordinate nationwide annihilation campaigns. The result was a form of warfare that projected the logic of total war but did not possess the technological means to enact it fully.

Although Sherman pushed nineteenth-century warfare toward its harshest extreme, significant technological limits and his own moral boundaries kept his campaigns from crossing into the unrestricted civilian violence that would define twentieth-century total war. The Union army lacked the technology and administrative coherence that later made total war possible: there were no long-range weapons capable of annihilating entire cities, no mechanized supply networks, no instant communication across battlefields, and no centralized command systems capable of enforcing uniform destruction across hundreds of miles. Yet material limits alone do not fully explain why Sherman's methods stopped short of becoming a true war against civilians themselves. Sherman repeatedly insisted that his men should destroy property, not people, and he issued explicit orders against killing noncombatants or even trespassing in homes saying, "Soldiers must not enter the dwellings of the inhabitants, or commit any trespass."⁴² This moral boundary, while imperfectly enforced, showed a deliberate refusal to cross into the unrestricted violence characteristic of total war in later conflicts. Whether the greater restraint came from technological limits or from Sherman's own sense of morality is difficult to untangle, but together they formed a ceiling that kept the Union from engaging in a fully realized total war.

Sherman's strategy ultimately occupied a unique space between past and future, blending elements of total war with the conventions of nineteenth-century conflict. His destruction of railroads, factories, and farms resembled the systemic targeting of infrastructure that would later define modern warfare, while his use of mobility, dispersed foraging parties, and reliance on horse-drawn logistics reflected older, pre-industrial methods. His campaigns functioned as a psychological war which was ahead of its time. Yet, Sherman still operated within the limits of an army that moved on foot and lived off the land. He did not seek the extermination or mass displacement of civilians, nor did he command the technological tools needed to make such policies easily possible, but he did erode the boundary between battlefield and home front in ways no previous American general had attempted. In this fusion of traditional maneuver warfare with the intentional destruction of a society's economic base, Sherman foreshadowed the hybrid nature of twentieth-century conflict.

Sherman's campaigns also altered perceptions of what warfare itself could accomplish. Sherman demonstrated that victory did not require the annihilation of enemy armies so much as the collapse of an enemy's society. Sherman made war an instrument of persuasion as much as destruction. Sherman introduced a new understanding of warfare as a social phenomenon, a contest of endurance and belief. His success in Georgia and South Carolina encouraged later generals and policymakers to think of war in systemic terms, where breaking the enemy's foundations was more important than occupying territory.

Popular memory often contrasts Sherman's methods with an imagined tradition of restrained, "civilized" warfare, but that ideal had always been more myth than reality. The Civil War was rarely, if ever, "gentlemanly," and the reality of any war is that combatants and civilians are often targeted as one. What set Sherman apart from other contemporary generals, such as George McClellan, was not that he broke with a long-standing code of so-called gentlemanly combat, but that he made explicit the harsher truths of war and turned them into deliberate strategy. He rejected the sentimental language of honor that many officers still used to describe military conduct, arguing instead that war worked by breaking an enemy's ability and will to resist. He openly defended his hard-war policies and clarified that he did not care if his methods were unpopular, saying, "If the people raise a howl against my barbarity and cruelty, I will answer that war is war, and not popularity-seeking."⁴³ Sherman did not operate under

any pretense that war was an honorable struggle; he saw it as dirty work that needed to be done. This logic was surprisingly forward-thinking at the time and helped push American military philosophy away from its imagined revolutionary past toward the systematic, expansive approaches that defined twentieth-century warfare.

Sherman's redefinition of targets also influenced later U.S. military policy. His emphasis on destroying an enemy's logistics and morale appeared again in the Philippines at the turn of the century, in the strategic bombing campaigns of the Second World War, and even in the Vietnam War.⁴⁴ Each echoed Sherman's conviction that the quickest path to peace was through overwhelming dominance over an opponent's resources and spirit. Sherman's unique strategies entered U.S. military thinking through formal institutions and professional study as the United States shifted from a volunteer army to a professionalized officer corps after the Civil War. Sherman himself played an important role in this transformation. As commanding general of the Army, he helped establish the School of Application for Infantry and Cavalry at Fort Leavenworth in 1881. The school's purpose was to systematize military education and train officers in the complexities of modern, large-scale warfare. Early instructors at Leavenworth frequently turned to Sherman's campaigns as case studies in operational mobility, logistical disruption, and the psychological dimensions of war. His correspondence was assigned reading, and his Georgia and Carolina operations were used to teach planning, supply management, and the integration of movement with strategic messaging. Sherman's influence on the school's curriculum shaped how generations of officers understood the relationship between civilian resources, morale, and military success.

European observers largely dismissed the Civil War's large-scale destruction and deep logistical strikes as the product of a uniquely American, unsophisticated theater of war. Prussian officer Justus Scheibert, who spent seven months studying Union and Confederate forces, found American military strategy irrelevant to European conditions. Like many European analysts, he believed that densely populated nations with stronger fortifications, professional armies, and shorter supply lines would never experience a conflict resembling the American Civil War.⁴⁵ As a result, European military academies largely ignored American military innovations, treating them as idiosyncratic responses to the geographical vastness and volunteer armies of the United States. Yet twentieth-century conflicts, especially the Second World War, proved that Sherman had anticipated a broader transformation in strategy. The systematic targeting of logistics, morale, and civilian industrial capacity became central to both Axis and Allied campaigns. In retrospect, Sherman's methods were not an American anomaly but an early expression of the totalizing pressures that would come to define industrial warfare.

The United States first applied Sherman-like principles abroad during the Philippine-American War, where officers such as J. Franklin Bell implemented the burning of enemy supplies and homes, the destruction of crops, and the coercion of civilian infrastructure to break guerrilla resistance. These controversial practices echoed Sherman's conviction that war was won by dismantling the social and material structures that sustained resistance. The same logic appeared again on a vastly larger scale in the Second World War. American and Allied planners embraced deep-strike operations that targeted transportation networks, industrial centers, and the broader civilian economy in Germany and Japan. Strategic bombing campaigns, while a new medium of fighting, rested on the same belief that destroying a nation's productive capacity and eroding civilian morale could bring about collapse more efficiently than attritional battles. In this global context, Sherman's approach no longer looked like an American anomaly but rather an early iteration of the industrial-age warfare that would come to define the mid-twentieth century.

Vietnam brought Sherman's logic full circle, as American commanders once again turned to the destruction of enemy food supplies and civilian infrastructure, demonstrating how deeply his conception of hard war had embedded itself in U.S. military strategy. Colin Powell recalled operations in which American troops burned homes and destroyed crops, reflecting that "in the hard logic of war, what difference did it make if you shot your enemy or starved, him to death?"⁴⁶ His testimony underscores how Sherman's conception of war seeped into American strategic culture. Across the twentieth century, from the Philippines to World War Two to Southeast Asia, U.S. commanders repeatedly applied forms of coercion aimed at enemy societies. The adaptability of Sherman's strategies ensured that they remained the framework for American warfare throughout the twentieth century.

Modern American generals inherited Sherman's ideas and sometimes drew directly on him for inspiration. George S. Patton admired Sherman's relentless operational mobility and believed wholeheartedly in striking deep to unbalance an enemy. His determination to push rapidly across France in 1944, driving "straight to the Rhine," echoed Sherman's conviction that speed and psychological shock could break an opponent more effectively than attrition.⁴⁷ The senior American field commander in Europe during the Second World War, General Omar Bradley, likewise looked to Sherman as a guide. As one study notes:

He was especially interested in the campaigns of William T. Sherman, whom he considered a master of the war of movement. He had concluded that many of the men who had fought in France [in World War One] had been misled by the experience of that static war; for Bradley, Sherman and his tactics were more relevant to any future war than the battle reports of the American Expeditionary Forces.⁴⁸

Bradley believed that World War I's trench stalemate taught the wrong lessons, encouraging officers to expect stagnant positional warfare, whereas Sherman's campaigns demonstrated how mobility and flexible maneuvering could decide modern conflicts. For commanders like Patton and Bradley, Sherman offered a model of excellence for war in the twentieth century. Sherman's appeal to later generals rested precisely on his refusal to fit neatly into existing categories, a refusal that has continued to complicate how historians interpret him and his campaigns years later.

Sherman's reputation among historians has been unusually volatile. In the decades following the Civil War, Northern writers celebrated him as the general who broke the Confederacy's will, but Southern commentators constructed a very different image. By the eighteen-eighties and eighteen-nineties, Lost Cause publications worked to solidify Sherman as the embodiment of Northern cruelty, casting The March to the Sea as an assault on "civilization" rather than a military campaign. This rhetoric turned Sherman into a cultural symbol of hatred rather than a historical figure. For generations, Southern identity became anchored around stories of victimization and destruction brought on by General Sherman and his barbarous men. Early academic treatments in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries absorbed elements of this debate, oscillating between praising Sherman's decisiveness and condemning him as a monster.

Twentieth-century interpretations reshaped Sherman again, now through the lens of modern warfare. After the world wars, and as the Lost Cause narrative began to subside, historians and popular writers increasingly described him as the father of total war, an argument amplified by works such as B. H. Liddell Hart's *Sherman: Soldier, Realist, American* (1929) and later by titles like *Merchant of Terror: General Sherman and Total War* (1973).⁴⁹ These studies portrayed his campaigns as precursors to the industrial and civilian-targeted conflicts of the twentieth century, often overstating his intentions and his destructiveness. Beginning in the nineteen-nineties, a major revisionist wave challenged this view. Mark Grimsley's *The Hard Hand of War* (1995) introduced the term "hard war" as a historically grounded alternative, emphasizing the operational limits that distinguished Sherman from true total war. Recent scholarships have extended this narrative by focusing on questions of race, gender, memory, occupation, and cultural mythmaking.⁵¹ Twenty-first-century historians portray Sherman as neither a uniquely destructive commander nor the founder of total war. This evolving historiography shows how interpretations of Sherman often reveal more about the concerns of each generation than about the man himself.

Sherman's campaigns in Georgia and South Carolina marked a pivotal moment in the development of modern warfare. The deliberate destruction of key buildings, the systematic seizure of civilian resources, and the calculated assault on Confederate morale created a conflict unlike anything previously seen in the United States. Sherman shifted the Union's approach from limited military engagement to a campaign that applied continuous and overwhelming pressure. His operations demonstrated that victory depended not only on defeating armies in the field but also on breaking the social and material structures that sustained them. In this sense, Sherman's concept of "hard war" connected the strategies of the nineteenth century with the total wars that would define the twentieth century. Although his actions accelerated the Confederacy's collapse, they also forced Americans to confront the ethical boundaries of armed conflict. Civilians bore the greatest burden of Sherman's strategy, and the memory of

that suffering endures in the South to this day. The human toll of the march raised fundamental questions about necessity and responsibility in wartime, with which generals still grapple.

In the years that followed, Sherman's methods helped shape the evolution of American military policy. Future generations of commanders studied his reliance on mobility and psychological pressure and adapted these techniques to the industrial and ideological conflicts of their time. His strategies offered a model for how wars could be won by targeting the foundations of an enemy's society, but they also revealed the profound moral cost of such an approach. Sherman preserved the Union and redefined the possibilities of military strategy, and in the process, he altered the nature of war itself. In the aftermath of the march, the line between what war required and what war allowed became far more difficult to draw.

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PLAYING WITH POWER: INDIAN GAMING AND SURVIVAL IN CALIFORNIA

TREVOR EILANDER

Abstract: The twentieth century was a time of great change for the Native peoples of California, and Indian Gaming defined the final decades of the century and allowed California's Natives the chance to flourish. The historiography of Indian Gaming in California has mostly been concerned with the legal history of the *California v. Cabazon Band of Mission Indians* case and the resulting economic development of California's gaming tribes. This paper reaches into the cultural history of California's tribes and the political history of treaty making between Californian native nations and the United States government. A close reading of tribal compacts, Supreme Court cases, Native run websites, newspapers, and existing gambling literature are synthesized together to argue that California has had a uniquely hostile stance towards Native sovereignty through the breaking of treaties, and Indian Gaming was utilized as a survival method to build economic independence and political power.

California is the home of millions, and its population is marked by great diversity in both origin and economic background. Yet, before anyone came to the state in search of opportunity, escape, or wealth, hundreds of Native tribes claimed the land as their home. The indigenous Indians of the region established firm roots for thousands of years, prior to any European contact or colonization, and it was in California that the Native people learned to survive and adapt to the shifting demands of the landscape. The Indians of California did everything in their power to survive and thrive in their environment by hunting the local wildlife, foraging for food amidst the region's flora, and cultivating the land through controlled burning and agriculture. Far from being a rigid and unchanging monolith, California's natives kept a fluid and adaptable common culture that benefited from changing circumstances. This trait of flexibility was put to the test by the arrival of the Spanish, and their system of missions, and then stretched to the breaking point by Anglo-American frontiersmen.

The United States was driven to expand from sea to sea under the ethos of Manifest Destiny, and California served as the culmination of westward expansion as the final frontier that the American empire sought to conquer and subdue. This belief in an inevitable and preordained domination over the land and its inhabitants acted as a strong cultural motivation for Anglo-American settlers, and these white frontiersmen were more than willing to kill in the name of this culture. The discovery of gold in California and the Gold Rush that followed created a massive economic motive for entry into California not just within the United States, but around the world.

The arrival of tens of thousands of settlers, people thirsting for land, and fortune they could extract from it, created an immense ecological strain on California's native tribes, as traditional areas that acted as hunting grounds or harvest land were torn apart in the search for gold. Further damaging still was the genocidal intent of the Californian government and the settlers who sought to 'tame' the newest addition to the United States. Many tribes were driven to extinction at the hands of white settlers seeking profit from the bounty placed on Native scalps. This era put the cultural flexibility of Native Californians and their ability to survive to the limit, and even when gold fever and the mania for Indian scalps ended, California's indigenous people were reduced to a historic low in terms of population and economic power. These histories of violence and populations barely clinging onto life contrast heavily with the status of modern-day Native tribes, who have found great success and wealth from the use of casinos. California Indians have proven their ability to survive once more, and their use of Indian Gaming was the defining adaptation that helped the tribes of California claw their way back from the brink.

The twentieth century brought the rebuilding of Indian power and sovereignty nationwide, defining its latter half. In California, Native resistance manifested itself in the form of Indian casinos. While Indian Gaming did not start in California, it became a nationwide phenomenon, thanks to key court cases and legal propositions that emerged from the state. Legal victories achieved by California Natives also cast long enough shadows to change national law and the economies of neighboring states. This paper will explore the history of Indian Gaming across the state. While the initial seeds of California's Indian Gaming scene were planted in the mid-eighties, it was the late nineties and the turn of the millennium where Indian Gaming flourished into a statewide talking point. The first

section of the paper will provide the context that builds the cultural and legal background necessary to understand Indian Gaming by focusing on the treaty system that defined the relationship between the California government and the state's native tribes during the Gold Rush, culminating in the official creation of rancherias in the 1910s.

The second portion of the text will focus on the events leading up to the landmark Supreme Court case of *California v. Cabazon Band of Mission Indians* in 1987, and its immediate fallout and subsequent creation of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act the following year. The last section of the paper will be dedicated to the various legal and political battles fought between California's governors and Native casinos in the nineties and 2000s. The primary sources that comprise this paper are drawn from a combination of government documents, including Supreme Court cases, compacts between the state of California and its Native tribes, newspapers, and websites run by casino-owning tribes. The secondary sources that informed this body of work are a variety of texts that run the gambit from Indian cultural history, legalistic history focusing on Indian gambling on the national scale, and smaller case studies focused on Californian tribes alone. This paper will show that despite the United States government's long history of breaking its deals with the Native Americans of California, Indian Gaming has allowed many tribes to strengthen their sovereignty and independence, functioning as an important survival strategy.

Gambling is not an idea that originated with the Europeans who came to California. Nor is it an alien concept that was later worked into the daily life of California's tribes as a means of survival in the same manner that guns or horses were historically. While the mass adoption of gambling by the native peoples of California is an economic tactic that allows these groups to claw their way out of financial sinkholes, the form that gambling took in Native culture in the past is wildly different from the cardrooms and bingo parlors of today.¹ Understanding how these gambling traditions evolved alongside Californian Native culture is essential to understanding the importance of Indian Gaming in the state. Gambling traditions also present a glimpse into the diplomacy that shaped Native negotiations with the United States government during the Gold Rush.

Gambling has ancient roots in American Indian societies, stretching back to time immemorial.² This practice is by no means unique to California; instead, it acts as a shared cultural thread among the ingenious peoples of the American continent, with Pueblo art even recording the existence of dice games in Mesoamerica.³ What made the gambling of pre-contact Native America distinct from Western games of chance was the significant role these games played in religious and cultural life, with the very act of gambling considered sacred.⁴ Games of chance fostered connection not just amidst the individual gamblers, but also with the divine itself, as the games played by tribes across the continent mirrored stories from myth and legend, connecting each participant to a holy communal past in an act of storytelling.⁵ These games were connected to broader forces and concepts in the natural world, granting the gamblers a sense of control and connection to elements outside of their reach as mere mortals.⁶ What men could not do alone could be achieved through sacred play, as demonstrated by Zuni dice games designed to encourage the growth of crops and replenishment of wild game.⁷

Games require play spaces and rituals to instill them with holy importance, and those rituals act as a means of cultural preservation and lineage, keeping traditions alive through cultural events. The Cahuilla of California enshrined their creation myth in a game of chance, preserving a piece of oral history that would otherwise be at risk of being forgotten. Cahuilla legend states that in the primal darkness that existed before creation, a pair of twin deities were born and spent their time playing a guessing game; one twin would hide his smoking pipe from the other. His brother would wager to find the hidden pipe in the first game of chance.⁸ It was only after this game that the twins decided to create the world, and the Cahuilla game of *peon* acts as an imitation of the gambling between the two divine brothers.⁹ Cahuilla villages always reserved space for a sacred play area known as *malamtepupi*, ensuring that *peon* could be played in a properly holy and mystical area.¹⁰ The *malamtepupi* would also act as social hubs, allowing members of the tribe the chance to both connect with their companions and commune with the gods. *Peon* is still played today by many Southern Californian Indians, and its long-lasting legacy provides a strong tie to the faith and culture of Cahuilla ancestors.¹¹

The games of chance and luck provided California's Indian population with a means of leisure, mystic connection, and social bonding. Sporting events like the ball game known as *shinny* would bring villages of Chumash

and Ventura Indians together, who would bet on the success of their players in a game like hockey, and the winning side would grant half of the prize money to the village chief that hosted the match of *shinny*.¹² The bonds created by the sportsmanship of the players and the gamblers who contributed to the winnings helped to create ties between communities. Gaming before the Gold Rush acted as a subtle but vital piece in the greater chain of diplomacy between tribes. California's tribes had long used diplomacy to secure the survival and sovereignty of their people, and this diplomacy would be put to the test by the arrival of American settlers in massive waves after gold was discovered in California in 1848.¹³

California's entry into the American Union in 1850 brought the first wave of government-appointed Indian commissioners and treaty makers to the new state, and they brought with them a trend of ignorance and mismanagement that would define the state's relationship with its native populations. The United States Congress created a California superintendency to manage all Indians within the legal lines of the state map, irrespective of any tribes that had their territories overlap with the borders of Oregon or Nevada.¹⁴ These maps meant nothing to the Indians of the time, and the entire idea of divvying up the natural world into strict and harsh legal lines came across as nonsensical in Native culture. Yet California's natives were forced to work within this paradigm and identity, and the three federal commissioners appointed to meet with the tribes had next to no knowledge about the people or even the state they would be visiting.¹⁵ The common ground that Californian Indians found with one another through gaming and other shared activities created a tradition of negotiation and diplomacy, but the commissioners would negotiate only in favor of the United States, rather than aim towards compromise as the Natives had. The combination of these factors created an unstable foundation that would fail to properly protect California's tribes and would disenfranchise their descendants for years to come.

The purpose of the three commissioners was to move the Native peoples of California onto federally protected land in formal treaties, forcing them to give up their ancestral territory to the state.¹⁶ In return, they would receive government support and protection from a white settler population that sought to exterminate all Indians.¹⁷ This treaty system was a well-established cog in the greater machine of American expansion, but California provided a bevy of challenges that the commissioner system could not adapt to meet. Prior to the Gold Rush, California was host to a population of over 150,000 Native Americans.¹⁸ This number would be impossible to manage for a task force of just three men and the squadrons beneath them, leading to many regions and tribes being ignored due to the lack of manpower needed to meet and negotiate with them.

Further complicating matters was the fact that California Native culture was based on independent villages rather than larger confederations, as seen with the Iroquois.¹⁹ Each tribal group needed to be negotiated with on a village-by-village basis, adding to the amount of work that lay before the three commissioners. Over one hundred dialects existed amidst the languages of California's tribes, and not one of the three men assigned as commissioners spoke a single Native language.²⁰ Translators spoke Spanish to the Natives. Due to the tribe's familiarity with Spanish Missions, but details of the treaties would be lost in translation from English to Spanish, making it even harder for the Natives to understand what the treaties promised them. At times, Californian Indians were forced to negotiate at gunpoint, forcing the tribe members to accept the commissioners' terms or be killed where they stood.²¹ The understaffing of the commissioner system and the lack of preparedness for negotiating with such a large population meant that California was only able to create formal treaties with eighteen tribes out of the hundreds that existed within the state at the time.²² No longer able to push Indians further west, the American government struggled and floundered in its attempts to negotiate with the people of the final frontier of the continent. Natives could no longer rely on the history of fair negotiations and shared culture that emerged from sacred gaming and instead had to struggle for survival in the face of an invasive force.

Even though these initial treaties were flawed, they were still far more favorable to Native interests than what would soon follow. Despite sending the three commissioners to California in the first place, the United States Senate rejected all eighteen of the treaties presented to the Senate in 1852, denying the eighteen tribes even the barest promises of protection and peace that the treaties embodied.²³ The main reason for the refusal was the amount of land promised to the tribes who accepted treaties, which was 7.5 million acres of land, only seven percent of the state's entire acreage.²⁴ Senator John B. Weller, who later went on to become a governor of California, acted as one

of the loudest voices for denying the treaties, arguing that the potential for gold lurking within the land promised as reservations was too valuable a resource to potentially sign away to Native hands.²⁵ However, it was more than just greed that motivated his reasoning.

Weller pointed to the long history of white settlers violating the very treaties that the American government made with Native tribes, intruding onto Native land for opportunities at poaching, prospecting, kidnapping, murder, and rape.²⁶ If California were to live up to the treaties it made with the tribes, then further manpower and funding would be required to police the reservations. The very act of doing so would anger the voter base, who saw Indians as game to be hunted and a resource to be used.²⁷ Weller's reasoning appealed to his fellow congressmen, and the Senate voted in secret to deny the proposed treaties, refusing to inform the eighteen tribes who were already in the process of honoring their end of the bargain and leaving their tribal lands in favor of the reservations.²⁸ The truth had been obscured to benefit the state of California, and Natives would receive no true protection or benefit from the treaties despite acting in good faith. California's Indians had upheld their end of the bargain, but the United States cheated at the game of diplomacy through this betrayal, leaving the government with all the cards and the Indians powerless.

The emergence of the Red Power movement in the 1970s built a Pan-Indian identity across the United States that united many disparate tribes and people in a broader organization to protest the injustice done to them. Red Power was built on the collective frustrations of the nation's Native population, who found common ground in the poor treatment they had received from a country that promised much to the sovereign Indian nations it made treaties with, but failed to protect those nations against constant treaty violations.²⁹ Young revolutionaries joined with tribal elders to push for social change, pressuring the United States to honor the sovereignty of the tribes with which it had made binding contracts. Natives around the country were no longer content with the status quo, and the cultural wave of resistance against the government would go on to mold California's Native population.

One of the first rallying points during this resistance movement was the Trail of Broken Treaties Caravan, a collective effort of many Indian organizations that went on a cross-country protest demanding a new and fairer system between sovereign tribes and the United States.³⁰ The Trail of Broken Treaties as a concept is clearly demonstrated by the rejection of the eighteen treaties and the subsequent lack of proper care and treatment California's Natives received.³¹ The initial proposal of 7.5 million acres was reduced to a meager twenty-five thousand acres, split up across five different reservations.³² California's governor began to espouse a policy of extermination for Indians, and a settler population ravenous for the chance to enslave Indians threatened the lives of Natives regardless of whether they were on a reservation or not.³³

The truth behind the Senate's refusal of the treaties would not come to light until 1905, long after most of the tribes from the eighteen treaties had given up their land.³⁴ It would not be until 1909 that President Roosevelt established 117 *rancherias* meant to act as more official reservations for California's Indian population, finally replacing the failed half-measure provided by the state after the rejection of the eighteen treaties.³⁵ These *rancherias* were designed as safe havens for Native populations, as a 1890 census found that California's Indian populace had suffered a ninety percent decline from the days before the Gold Rush.³⁶ But even the construction of the *rancherias* fell far short of fulfilling the promise of 7.5 million acres. California's Natives were uniquely disadvantaged by the state government and denied even the most basic measures of protection and dignity thanks to these broken treaties. State antagonism towards its Native population only grew as Indian Gaming began to flourish within California.

The Native peoples of California continued the struggle for survival despite the meager economic and political opportunities present on the *rancherias*. The uselessness of the land limited any development close to home for the tribes, and discriminatory policies on the federal and state levels brought the Californian Indian population to the lowest brackets of health, education, housing, and income across the entire state.³⁷ Tribes bound to the *rancherias* knew they were being set up for failure and sought to escape from the harsh circumstances. These difficult conditions were only made worse by the election of Ronald Reagan during the 1980s, as the president slashed the federal budget for tribal services, encouraging tribes around the nation to express their sovereignty through economic development.³⁸

The government expected Native nations to pull themselves up by the bootstraps, although the tribes now had far less money to build their economies. But this did not stop California's Indian tribes. While the cut in funding damaged California's rancherias, the call to action for sovereignty alongside the success of the bingo facilities opened by the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin and the Seminole in Florida in the 1970s inspired the Cabazon band of Cahuilla Mission Indians to try their hand at entering the gaming scene.³⁹ The Cabazon saw how quickly success came to the bingo parlors and realized that they could recreate that financial magic in a uniquely Californian way. California law allowed cities to run card rooms where players would compete against each other in poker, a form of gambling distinct from Vegas-style casinos where players bet against the house.⁴⁰ By working within state laws, the Cabazon could create a business that would let them transform the useless land of the rancheria into a local gambling hot spot. Realizing the opportunity that lay before them, the Cabazon band began the preparations to open their card room in 1980. What followed would be a battle against the state that would reshape the landscape of Indian Gaming, not just in California, but the whole country.

The Cabazon knew that opening a card room would be a risky move to build their economic sovereignty. Public Law 280 granted six states limited jurisdiction over parts of reservations, and California was one of the six states where Congress put Public Law 280 into effect.⁴¹ An additional subsection of Public Law 280, passed in 1955, went as far as to grant the state of California criminal jurisdiction on Indian land, letting state officers police and patrol the reservations and rancherias.⁴² Unlike other states, California tribes like the Cabazon were at the mercy of a police force that had a long history of abusing Indians. This intimidation factor would not stop the Cabazon from trying their hands at this game of chance. If the card room were a success, it would be a major boon to the tribes' finances. Aware of the risks, the Cabazon openly advertised their plans to construct their card rooms, bought ad space in the city of Indio, and worked with baseball Hall of Fame star Leo Durocher to make the beginnings of their gambling operation as open and transparent as possible. It would not be long before the police chief of the City of Indio demanded that the Cabazon stop in their tracks.⁴³

Tribal leaders met with the chief and the rest of the county council to negotiate the matter, with the Cabazon intent to find some peace or compromise on the matter.⁴⁴ While the past had proven time and time again that the state's government was ready to oppose them, the Cabazon did as their ancestors did and approached the negotiating table in good faith. The police chief told the Cabazon that he believed the matter to be a conflict between two armies: blue police and red Indians, and that the red army would be squashed by the men in blue. This threat was made even though the city of Indio was already host to a poker club that was allowed under California laws, meaning that the police denied the Cabazon card room even when the tribe had every right to create one.⁴⁵ While the Cabazon came to negotiate, the police chief was intent on waging war with the Cabazon if they disregarded his warning. The law was applied on a discriminatory basis, and the Cabazon were given thinly veiled promises of violence despite being transparent in their intentions to create a card room. While state law promised them the opportunity, the local government failed to live up to that promise, creating another stone in the trail of broken treaties.

Despite being threatened by the police department, the Cabazon proceeded with opening the card room, knowing their legal rights. The tribe knew that the letter of the law was on their side, even if the police were against them. The first test game was held solely using staff, as the tribe did not wish to endanger any customers if the police attempted a raid. Officers arrived to observe but made no attempt to stop the card games. Emboldened by this initial success, the Cabazon would open the club on October 15th, 1980, and they would run it without any interruption for the first few days. Word of mouth spread quickly, and the club was an immediate success in Indio, hosting more than a hundred patrons. The Cabazon were already reversing their fortunes and bringing an influx of profit to the tribe. It was only on October 18th that the Indio police raided the club in full riot gear, arresting both employees and customers and confiscating all poker tables and chips present in the club.⁴⁶ This delay in prosecuting the Cabazon would ensure the most damage done to the tribe's reputation and create a sense of fear and paranoia among customers when the club reopened its doors. The Cabazon tried to avoid dragging any of their clientele into the matter out of concern for their customers, and the police department's delay in launching the raid exploited the sense of security that the first few days of success granted to the Cabazon.

The Cabazon would not allow this breach of the law to go unpunished. The Cabazon struck back against Indio in a legal battle that continued until May 14th, 1982, when the Ninth Circuit Court declared that the Cabazon were well within their legal rights to open the club as it was outside of Indio city limits and on reservation land.⁴⁷ The club was free to operate without the interference of the Indio city police department, and it appeared as if the Cabazon had claimed a hard-won victory. But by February 15th, 1983, the club was raided once again by the Riverside County Sheriff's Department. Indio was but one locality within Riverside County, and the legal victory against the city of Indio did nothing to protect the Cabazon from harassment by the rest of the county. Customers were once more put at risk by the excessive force of the raid, and one elderly customer fell into a traumatic episode as the raid made her relive her experience surviving Auschwitz. Everything that was not nailed down was seized by the Sheriff's Department, damaging the club that the Cabazon had invested so much in rebuilding.⁴⁸ California had betrayed its native peoples yet again and violated the legal rights of the tribe by using technicalities. Once more, the Cabazon would turn to the courtrooms to find justice. The tribe prepared for a legal battle to ensure the survival of not just the success of their business, but the sovereignty of the very tribe.

Cooperation allowed California Natives to come together in the face of a common enemy. The Cabazon soon allied with the Morongo Band, who faced a similar legal battle against Riverside County over the legality of a Morongo-run bingo operation.⁴⁹ Both groups filed separate suits against Riverside County for its overreach, attacking the county on two fronts. Neither the Cabazon nor the Morongo would take these injustices lying down, thanks to the spirit of resistance popularized by the Red Power movement. The similarities between each lawsuit led to the Cabazon and Morongo cases being combined by the judge presiding over the proceedings and moving into a state case at the request of California's Attorney General.⁵⁰ Once more, the government of California was ready to fight against impoverished native nations and strip them of the protections that the law promised to them. The Supreme Court of the United States would preside over the hearings, and the decision made by the court justices would have long-lasting implications for Indian gaming around the country.

The proceedings of the *California v. Cabazon Band of Indians* case demonstrate the systemic oppression and legal roadblocks that the state had built up over the centuries. California legal representatives argued that Public Law 280 granted the state and its counties full legal jurisdiction over native land, and that the Riverside Sheriff's Department was exercising its ability to police the reservation in both the Cabazon raid and the shutdown of the Morongo bingo parlor.⁵¹ The state's representatives went as far as to argue that it was not only the right but the responsibility of the state to shut down these Indian gaming establishments due to the risk of organized crime being attracted to the gambling offered by the Cabazon and Morongo.⁵² This pre-emptive policing ignored the fact that the city of Indio and the greater county of Riverside were hosts to multiple card rooms that were fully allowed to operate within city ordinances.⁵³

The Cabazon attorney Glenn Feldman argued that the Organized Crime Control Act (OCCA) that California was citing as justification for stopping organized crime from taking root only applied at the federal level, meaning state authorities were not responsible for the upholding of the OCCA. Additionally, no evidence of organized crime existed in the Cabazon's card room, meaning that even if California had the authority to enforce the OCCA, state officers could not intervene until a responsible cause was proven.⁵⁴ Feldman argued that California was engaging in an unfair form of preventive policing and that Riverside County overstepped in policing the Cabazon and Morongo. The weaknesses in California's arguments were becoming more apparent as the state's lawyers twisted the letter of the law to allow for multiple violations of tribal sovereignty.

Deep-seated cultural prejudices came to light during the hearings, where ignorant rhetoric was weaponized as a cudgel to beat down the arguments of the Cabazon and Morongo. Although Indian gaming was still relatively new within American society during the 1980s, the runaway success of the Seminole in Florida inspired a great degree of envy in the American public at the tribe's wealth. This led to a wave of demonization of Indian gambling for upsetting cultural and class lines.⁵⁵ Rich Indians challenged the traditional stereotypes of Native people as impoverished and isolated outliers removed from the rest of American society on rotting, faraway reservations.⁵⁶ The natural order of American society placed Indians on the lowest rung, and the economic potential of Indian gaming allows Natives to shed the skin of a disenfranchised, conquered people and step into a world reserved mostly for

white business owners.⁵⁷ Indians were made to be poor in the American mind, and California's legal representatives utilized this stereotype by arguing that the Morongo and Cabazon had no cultural history of gambling. Both nations were accused of appropriating the traditions of California's gambling industry to steal business from other poker clubs and bingo operations that existed before both Indian run businesses.

This accusation of cultural and economic plundering proved to be a large talking point during the hearings, which necessitated an anthropologist to provide a testimony, explaining the Cahuilla game of *peon* to the court.⁵⁸ Both the Cabazon and Morongo were part of the Cahuilla nations, and continued to mimic the power present in their creation stories through the playing of *peon*. Just as they had in the past, both nations utilized games of chance to socialize and bond with their neighbors; the Cabazon card room and Morongo bingo parlor were merely the newest examples of this gaming tradition.⁵⁹ Gambling had built power and an opportunity for negotiations for the entirety of Cahuilla history, and now it brought two Cahuilla nations the chance to bargain with the Supreme Court of the United States. The Cabazon and Morongo used the survival tactics of the past to argue for the legitimacy of their past.

Despite California's attempts to limit the freedoms of its native peoples yet again, the Cabazon and Morongo proved victorious in the end. The Supreme Court was not persuaded by the arguments presented by California and took umbrage with the misuse of the OCCA, stating that this manner of regulation would be an impermissible infringement on tribal sovereignty.⁶⁰ On February 25th, 1987, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Cabazon and Morongo bands over California and secured the economic future of both tribes.⁶¹ The legal precedent for tribes to open bingo parlors and card rooms had been set, but more questions remained, especially for the nation at large, as other Indian nations were moving to create their own gaming movements in response to the results of *Cabazon v. California*. Would the country see the rise of hundreds of miniature Las Vegas-style casinos built upon reservation land, free from any state regulation? Congress rushed to address those questions with the creation of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA) in 1988, only one year after the Cabazon case rocked the landscape of Indian gaming.⁶²

Tribal sovereignty has always remained under the control of Congress, and Indian Gaming was merely the newest expression of sovereignty. Both the United States and the tribal nations would need to compromise on this matter.⁶³ The IGRA divided gaming into three categories: class one games referred to traditional Indian games such as *peon*, while class two games allowed for bingo and card games like poker, where players bet against one another rather than the house. All states except Utah and Hawaii allowed their native tribes to operate class one and class two gaming under the IGRA.⁶⁴ Class three gaming is reserved for slot machines, table games such as roulette, and bets against the house: forms of gambling normally exclusively reserved for Las Vegas-style casinos. The IGRA made the unprecedented move of requiring native nations to negotiate regulatory agreements called compacts with the state in which the reservation is located.⁶⁵ That meant that matters of Indian gaming would no longer be handled by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The IGRA brought every nation and state to the negotiation table, creating a new paradigm for tribal relations across the country.

What began as a conflict between one band of Indians and one city snowballed into something far greater. The intrusion of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department into not just one but two Indian run operations attracted the attention of the Supreme Court and elevated a city dispute into a national legal event. Though California tried to limit the sovereignty and freedom of its Native citizens as it always had, the Cabazon and Morongo survived the legal battle and returned home with the protections necessary to keep their businesses running without any further intrusion by California law enforcement. A veritable panic swept through Congress in light of the results of *Cabazon v. California* as lawmakers sought to control and regulate the potential of Indian gaming.⁶⁶ The treaty-making of California's past would go on to influence the national stage, as Indian tribes across the country gained the opportunity to work directly with the state, just as California's commissioners had prior to the rejection of the eighteen treaties by Congress. But even in the wake of this victory, California's Natives would have to be ready for more betrayal and obstruction from the government of the state. After all, the negotiations of the Gold Rush era were often held at the expense of the tribes. The survival and success of Indian gaming businesses rested on the ability of California's sovereign nations to carve out a better deal for themselves in this new economic frontier.

The compact system outlined by the passage of the IGRA was a momentous turn towards strengthening sovereignty for Native nations across the country. This granted Indian nations direct negotiations with state governments, but the change in national policy did not transform California overnight. The government of California had a long history of opposing Native interests, and it would not abandon that tradition without a fight. Governor Pete Wilson met with many of California's tribes in 1991 to organize compacts under the IGRA, but he soon butted heads with tribal leaders over disagreements over the usage of slot machines. Wilson unfairly contested that slot machines were fully illegal in California, despite the IGRA allowing slot machines under class three gaming.⁶⁷ Notably, Wilson based his ban on the belief that slot machines would draw in the threat of organized crime to the state, repeating the same arguments Californian representatives used in *California v. Cabazon Band of Indians*.⁶⁸

Even after the victories of the Cabazon and Morongo, California Indians were still treated as would-be criminals, even when they had the full legal protections provided by the IGRA and a stamp of approval from the United States Supreme Court. Emboldened by the examples set by the alliance between the Cabazon and Morongo, the tribes came together to sue Governor Wilson, leading to the *Rumsey Indian Rancheria of Wintun Nation v. Wilson* case, citing the hypocrisy of the governor, as the California state lottery was functionally similar to slot machines, operating on much of the same mechanics.⁶⁹ But the Wintun Nation was met with little sympathy from the California Supreme Court, which decided in 1996 that the lottery was distinct enough to avoid the ban on slot machines, closing the case in favor of Governor Wilson. The Wintun were not content with that answer and appealed to the United States Supreme Court to intervene but were ignored.⁷⁰ Wilson established himself as a firm opponent to all of California's Indian casinos.

Governor Wilson tried to restrict Indian Gaming as much as he could but failed in his duties as a state official by neglecting his appointed responsibilities. Wilson refused to meet with tribal negotiators in 1992 after the failure to have the tribes agree to the ban of slot machines the previous year. He then went further and had the California Supreme Court protect him from having to renegotiate with the tribes.⁷¹ California's gaming tribes had a right under the IGRA to work out the terms of their compacts but instead were met with a man who tried to create a legal deadlock to halt compact revisions. Pressure to uphold his duties as state governor led to Wilson meeting with the Pala Band of Mission Indians in 1998 to create the Pala Compact; but in an unprecedented move, Wilson declared that any other gaming nation would need to agree to the terms of the Pala Compact, rather than create the individual compacts that the IGRA promised.⁷²

The terms outlined by the Pala Compact heavily favored the state by limiting the amount of slot machines allowed in class three Indian casinos, and infringed upon Native sovereignty by allowing state counties the right to veto the development of any Indian casinos within county lines.⁷³ This clause brings to mind the same tactics used by the Riverside County Sheriff Department in its raid on the Cabazon card room, namely, the legal loophole of the Cabazon card room being allowed within the city of Indio, but not the county in which Indio was located. The tribes were incensed by such a blatantly unfair attempt to upend their compact rights and banded together to create a coalition against the governor.⁷⁴ If he refused to do his duty, then the tribes would take the matter to the people of the state.

Many of California's casino-owning tribes banded together to put a proposition on the ballot for 1998 to reach out to the state public for support, as the state government was clearly uninterested in cooperation. The Tribal Government Gaming and Economic Self-Sufficiency Act- Prop 5, was created by Native interest groups to amend the law of the state to require the enforcement of state compacts for class three gaming, preventing Governor Wilson's Pala Compact from forcing all tribes into a one-size-fits-all agreement.⁷⁵ Inviting neighbors to play games of chance with the host tribe built tightly knit bonds for Californian tribes prior to the Gold Rush, and now the casino tribes were inviting their allies and customers in aid of the Natives in a time of need. Californian tribes were now flush with cash due to the success of their casinos, proving that the use of Indian Gaming was the best survival tactic for the Natives of California. Tribal leaders were quick to put that money to use through donations to allies with politicians, and to fund a strong advertising campaign that appealed to the people of California by emphasizing the hard work done by tribal casinos.⁷⁶

These expenses were vital, as groups from outside of the state were staking their own profits on a bet of Indian failure. Las Vegas casinos saw the development of California Indian Gaming as a rival to the profitability of Nevada and rushed to back the 'No on 5' campaign with twenty-five million dollars invested total.⁷⁷ The Republican Party joined with Vegas casinos to create advertisements that portrayed Californian tribes as an insidious cultural monolith of rich Indians, playing on the racial anxieties of the voter base by painting the casino tribes as not being truly Indian, due to not being impoverished reservation residents.⁷⁸ This propaganda was soundly rejected by the state population, as Prop 5 passed with a resounding sixty-two percent of the vote, acting as a watershed moment for Indian gaming in California.⁷⁹ More than eighty-eight tribes came together to spend sixty-three million in support of Prop 5, and their hard work had paid dividends with mass approval from the state populace.⁸⁰ The tribes used the self-reliance of Indian gaming to persuade the majority of the population to support their efforts, and invested casino profits into demolishing the Vegas-backed campaign of propaganda meant to demonize Native success. The tribal casinos had won the right to fair compacts, but even with the success of Prop 5, the state government had no interest in playing fair.

California's tribes achieved a momentous victory with the passage of Prop 5, but their celebrations were short-lived. One month after the proposition passed, the California Supreme Court blocked Prop 5, citing the illegality of Nevada and Vegas-style casinos within the state.⁸¹ This betrayal did more than disrespect the Native nations who worked hard to rally support for the passage of Prop 5. The State Supreme Court ignored the will of the people to block Indian gaming, spitting on the voters who sided with the tribes. Nevada businesses made one last bid to disenfranchise Native-run casinos by appealing to California's Supreme Court, trying to prevent the development of any businesses that would threaten the monopoly that Las Vegas had on West Coast gaming.⁸² The legalistic battle between Nevada businesses and California Indian casinos acts as a microcosm of the larger conflict between the United States government and Native tribes, and the fact that interests from outside the state were attempting to use California as the battleground for opposing Native sovereignty shows how little had changed since the days of the Supreme Court denying Californian treaties.⁸³

Just as the United States government denied Californian tribes the reservation land promised to them, Nevada was now trying to overturn the legal protections that Native Californians earned through an open and fair election. California's tribes were used to betrayal and abuse by the state government, but they were no longer at the mercy of a state that broke every treaty and promised it would be made. Indian Gaming had forged connections to the Californian public, and even after the massive expenses spent in support of Prop 5, the casino tribes had both the wealth and public support to oppose the latest assault on their sovereignty. Californian tribes banded together once more to put Proposition 1A on the ballot for 2000, which would amend the state constitution to grant the protections that the IGRA compacts promised, and prevent the Supreme Court from overturning Prop 5.⁸⁴ The Natives called for support, and the voters answered eagerly, culminating in the passage of Prop 1A with a resounding sixty-four percent of the vote, surpassing the support rating of Prop 5 by two percent.⁸⁵ Rather than merely surviving a legal onslaught that would have left them poorer, Californian Indians used Indian gaming to fight the state and win, demonstrating that the tribes would no longer tolerate being pushed around by a state government that opposed them.

The turn of the millennium brought much success to California's casino tribes and was the culmination of a century of Native struggle and perseverance. Governor Gray Davis succeeded Governor Jerry Brown and was much more sympathetic to Indian Gaming than his predecessor. Governor Davis created a new compact with the Pala Band of Mission Indians in the year 2000 to replace Brown's purposefully limited Pala Compact from 1998, creating a much fairer deal for the Pala that allowed the slot machines that Brown tried to contain.⁸⁶ The tribe that was once constricted by uneven deals now had the freedom to develop its economy in honest compacts with the governor. Other tribes blossomed into economic powerhouses, considering Prop 5 and Prop 1. The Cabazon had created so much profit from their card room that all tribal members had guaranteed employment at the tribal casino, and funds were invested into the reservation to construct free homes for any tribal member willing to move to the reservation.⁸⁷ Indian Gaming acts as an expression of Native sovereignty and makes the world for Californian Natives a much fairer place, helping them to create support networks where none existed.⁸⁸ Although the years to

come would see the state attempt to limit Indian Gaming, those attempts would quickly be repealed and reduced in scope, demonstrating the strength of California's casino tribes.

Californian tribes continued to see a meteoric rise from the success of Indian gaming, and they used that success to further build their sovereignty and economic independence, placing the tribes on an equal footing with the rest of the state population. The common resentment Californians have towards Native success reared its ugly head when communities felt threatened as tribal casinos expanded their reach beyond reservations, building new locales closer to population centers.⁸⁹ Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger appealed to those unhappy voters by building his 2003 campaign on taking money back from Native casinos, demanding that the tribes pay a fair share to the state government.⁹⁰ On the surface, this appears as a violation of tribal sovereignty, as the profits from Native-run casinos are meant to go untaxed by the state as part of the IGRA. But the gaming tribes of California had enough political clout to negotiate with Schwarzenegger and worked out a deal with the governor that would see the tribes pay twenty-five percent of their profits in exchange for the removal of the limit that Governor Davis had placed on slot machines.⁹¹ Davis enforced a strict cap of two thousand slot machines per tribe; far more than what Wilson allowed, but still a non-negotiable limit. Schwarzenegger, by contrast, let tribes surpass the limit to meet market demands, causing a massive boom in the profitability of Indian gaming, even with the twenty-five percent cut set aside for the state government.⁹² The gaming tribes knew to use compromise and negotiation to survive, and their flexibility was rewarded with a growth to their cash flow. Once Schwarzenegger left office, his successor, Governor Jerry Brown, reduced the amount of money that gaming tribes had to pay to the state by two-thirds and redirected the money previously paid into the general fund into the development of poorer tribes.⁹³ The success of Indian gaming elevated all of California's Native community, helping to elevate even tribes without casinos out of the poverty that the state enforced onto its indigenous inhabitants by stealing their land.

California's Native population faced the logical conclusion of Manifest Destiny. The United States government built its success upon pushing Indian tribes to further peripheries, growing wealthy off the land it had stolen. When the nation stretched from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean, it was left at a loss on how to address the question of what to do with California's Indians. Government-appointed commissioners struggled to meet with every tribe for negotiations, and while the language barriers and violent methods used by the commissioners compromised the fairness of the treaties, the treaties promised 7.5 million acres of reservation land for the tribes who agreed to the terms of the deals. This mere sliver of the state's geography was deemed far too generous to Native interests by the Supreme Court, and the government rejected the deal and forced California's tribes onto near-useless land, creating the antagonism that would define the state's relationship with its indigenous people. Emboldened by the Red Power movement and the success of Indian Gaming elsewhere in the nation, Californian Indians worked diligently to reclaim their sovereignty through gambling, drawing on a rich history of social traditions that used games of chance to reach out to neighbors and befriend them. These bonds were used alongside alliances between different tribes to create coalitions that reshaped the laws surrounding Indian Gaming on a national level. Although the government of California has launched assaults on Native sovereignty time and time again, the tribes of California have resisted every attack and emerged stronger from them. Indian gaming has done more than just allow Californian Indians to survive. They have used gaming to build a fortress of sovereignty that elevates Natives across the state and are reaping the benefits from the fruits of their work.

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YELLOW MEDICAL POWER: COMMUNITY HEALTH ACTIVISM IN THE CALIFORNIA ASIAN AMERICAN MOVEMENT, 1960s-1970s

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Abstract: By the late 1960s, Asian American activist groups in California had collectively forged a pan-ethnic alliance centered on the recognition of decades-long racial discrimination and socioeconomic inequality. Drawing inspiration from the Black Panther Party, the Asian American Movement of the 1960s and 1970s sought to create self-determined institutions to address systemic inequalities, including physical and mental health facilities and programs. By the late 1960s, activists developed a health consciousness that critiqued the model minority myth and capitalism as major forces that undermined the well-being of Asian Americans. As an expression of medical self-sovereignty in local communities, health institutions and programs became integral to the broader Asian American Movement's vision of self-determination and cultural autonomy. Physical and mental health programs also functioned as a source of empowerment for marginalized groups within Asian American communities, including Asian American women and incarcerated Asian Americans.

In 1969, Los Angeles Asian American youth activists created *Gidra*, a monthly publication centered on discussing prevalent issues within Asian American communities across California. In the seventh issue that year, Asian American activist Amy Uyematsu wrote a piece titled, "The Emergence of Yellow Power," in which she argued that "the American capitalistic dream was never meant to include non-whites."¹ The mass acclaim of the article illustrated the prevailing attitude amongst Asian American activists: they needed to mobilize and exert institutional self-determination and autonomy to combat institutional racism. Like many other marginalized communities in the 1960s and 1970s, Asian Americans rallied together to advocate for self-determination and an end to racially oppressive institutional forms of discrimination, including health care. Inspired by the Black Panther Party, Asian American activists across California participated in self-determined institution-building as a means of addressing systemic inequalities that disproportionately affected Asian Americans.

The rise of self-determined medical activism and care illustrates a unique case study for understanding medical activism and how it reflected the broader political goals of the Asian American movement of the 1960s and 1970s, particularly community institution building. While numerous prominent Asian American historians have written extensively on the Asian American Movement, such as in William Wei's *The Asian American Movement*, and more recently, in Karen Ishizuka's *Serve the People*, they have largely placed the analysis of community-based medical care in the background of their narratives.² Using Alondra Nelson's framework from her book *Body and Soul*, I view the creation of Asian American community health centers and programs as a monumental characteristic of the broader medical civil rights movement. While Nelson's work concentrates specifically on the Black Panther Party and their response to long-standing medical inequalities, this study seeks to expand the concept of a medical civil rights movement. I aim to explore it as a broader phenomenon, focusing on the rise of medical and social self-determination across various Asian American communities across California.³ This generalization of the medical civil rights movement encapsulates the experiences of many marginalized communities in the twentieth century, but this paper will focus on situating Asian Americans within this social-medical historical framework.

I argue that Asian Americans' struggles with institutional economic and social inequalities shaped their understanding of healthcare as a fundamental right by the late 1960s. Activists developed a health consciousness that critiqued the model minority myth and capitalism as major forces undermining the well-being and socioeconomic mobility of Asian Americans. The failure of government officials and medical professionals to address these concerns catalyzed the emergence of Asian American medical self-sovereignty in the 1960s and 1970s. Despite challenges like limited funding, these health institutions and programs became integral to the broader Asian American movement, which championed feminism, self-determination, empowerment, and cultural autonomy.

This paper begins with a brief analysis of the rise of health consciousness through historical events such as the spread of bubonic plague in the United States, Japanese American incarceration, and increased reliance on Asian migrant farmworkers across California. These events and processes contributed to the emergence of a pan-eth-

nic ideology of medical inequality that recognized the role of institutions in producing poor health outcomes and inadequate medical care. Using activists' journals, newspapers, and oral histories, I take a thematic approach to examine two particular ways in which Asian Americans developed self-determined medical institutions and programs. The first section explores the emergence of community-based medical facilities, efforts to maintain effective systems of care, and the challenges these institution-building efforts faced. The second section focuses on the cognitive dissonance created by societal stereotypes, such as the model minority myth, and the resulting need for self-help mental health and self-affirming care programs, particularly in relation to drug overdoses and Asian American incarceration. As in the broader Asian American movement, women often found themselves excluded. In response, Asian American women asserted their gendered and racialized experiences by establishing their own medical programs and mental health self-help groups designed to empower and support women.

Asian Americans remain underrepresented in both the history of social movements and medical history, even as the intersections of medicine and race have increasingly become more prevalent in historical analysis. Since the mid-twentieth century, popular culture and media have portrayed Asian Americans as a model minority who adhere to societal expectations. This study seeks to challenge the perception of Asian American ethnic groups as docile or passive by examining how the Asian American Movement in the 1960s and 1970s incorporated medical activism into its broader critiques of structural racism and capitalism. By exploring this intersection, this study reveals how Asian American activists used healthcare issues as a social platform for addressing systemic inequality, asserting their agency, and resisting declining socioeconomic conditions amidst a turbulent American society.

A growing awareness of medical inequalities that existed within activist journals and community reports at the end of the 1960s. As a writer in the activist journal *Gidra* wrote: "Behind the façade of beautiful tourist attractions in Los Angeles Chinatown, lurks the unknown ugliness of tiny attics, ever-crowding sewing factories and filthy hotel rooms – the unfortunate inhabitants of which may be afflicted with tuberculosis."⁴ This line, from an issue of the activist journal *Gidra*, reflects the growing awareness of medical inequalities that existed within activist journals and community reports at the end of the 1960s. Experiencing decades of institutional discrimination, Asian American youth activists decided to focus on eliminating healthcare inequalities that jeopardized vulnerable groups. In doing so, they framed culturally responsive healthcare as a fundamental right that American lawmakers and medical officials had obstructed for decades. Drawing inspiration from the Black Panther Party and the Long Medical Civil Rights Movement, Asian American communities across California developed political platforms that linked healthcare to political sovereignty and anti-imperialism. Like African American activists, Asian Americans were "sick and tired of being sick and tired."⁵

European and Anglo-American groups have often depicted Asian immigrants as a diseased and inferior group since the arrival of Asian groups in North America in the colonial period. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Californian lawmakers justified exclusionary immigration laws targeting Chinese, Japanese, and South Asian immigrants using the threat of contagious disease as a justification. This association between Asian bodies and contagion became especially pronounced during the global spread of bubonic plague at the turn of the twentieth century. In San Francisco, lawmakers and public health officials confined Chinese residents to Chinatown and forced many traveling immigrant groups, such as merchants, to coercive and experimental inoculations.⁶ The policing and intensive surveillance of behavior in San Francisco's Chinatown created decades-long distrust of Western medical facilities and healthcare.

The Chinese even came to view institutions intended to serve Chinese populations, such as the Tung Wah Dispensary, with hostility due to their compliance with intensive interrogation and monitoring of plague symptoms.⁷ While these tensions eventually subsided after the transformation of the Tung Wah Dispensary into the Chinese Hospital in 1924, Chinese immigrants continued to suffer from both negative public perceptions and significant health disparities rooted not inherently in their race, but in their impoverished living conditions. For much of the first half of the twentieth century, Chinatown residents demanded better living conditions as they faced higher rates of tuberculosis due to overcrowding, high housing costs, and racial segregation policies that prevented Chinese from living elsewhere in the city.⁸ By the 1960s, Chinese American youth had grown up witnessing these

entrenched socioeconomic and medical inequalities, which cultivated a deepening resentment toward state policies and the healthcare institutions that had long marginalized their communities.

Similar to Chinese immigrants, Japanese Americans in California experienced restricted and unequal access to healthcare, shaped by a similar logic of exclusion. On February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's passage of Executive Order 9066 forcibly relocated thousands of Japanese in California. Stripped of their personal businesses and property, Japanese Americans lived in prison-like internment camps for much of the United States' involvement in World War II. These camps, designed to detain those deemed public threats, lacked adequate housing, food, and medical facilities. Although officials took measures to ensure that all camps had Japanese American medical personnel, medical facilities often lacked essential equipment and supplies necessary for proper medical care, such as bedding, suture needles, and bandages.⁹

The environmental conditions of the camps, coupled with their poor construction, often exacerbated health complications. For instance, dust storms caused interned Japanese to suffer from illnesses, such as asthma or coccidioidomycosis, a form of lung infection caused by fungus in warmer regions of the U.S.¹⁰ Asian American historian Connie Chiang argues that the natural environment of the camps became central to the memory of wartime incarceration due to the pervasive effect that diseases and environmental conditions had on those who returned to California.¹¹ Through these experiences, Japanese Americans developed a sharper awareness of the medical inequalities imposed on them, which laid the groundwork for later critiques of state power and public health institutions.

By the end of the 1960s, Asian American ethnic groups had integrated medical inequalities into the broader Asian American movement's political goals. Recognizing that impoverished conditions and inadequate government funding in predominantly Asian American communities contributed to medical disparities, activist groups sought to conduct and disseminate their own independent research on the health of their communities. In 1969, the San Francisco Chinese Community Citizens' Survey and Fact Finding Committee conducted a comprehensive analysis of living conditions in San Francisco's Chinatown. The committee uncovered a serious concern; the tuberculosis rates in Chinatown were nearly four times higher than those of other neighborhoods in the city, representing an even higher rate than in the first half of the twentieth century.¹² By producing their own data and evidence of clear medical disparities, activists challenged the authority of public health institutions and sought to claim expertise over the issues that plagued their community.

In the same year, Chinese youth in Chinatown formed a group similar to the Black Panthers called the Red Guards. In the party's first community newspaper, the Red Guards presented the inequalities in Chinatown, including the higher rate of tuberculosis, through the lens of imperialism, arguing that the Chinese faced exploitation at the hands of "avaricious businessmen and politicians" and needed to enact change to free the people "from the wraths of the oppressors."¹³ In more rural parts of California, the Filipino-Mexican United Farm Workers Organizing Committee took matters into its own hands through the examination of healthcare in the agricultural sector. In the same year as the formation of the Red Guard, they published a flyer detailing the dangers of poisonous pesticides such as DDT, arguing that workers needed a union contract and the right to healthcare, given that over 100 million pounds of pesticides were being applied to California's fields every year.¹⁴ As various independent groups emerged throughout the state, they all developed similar arguments surrounding the role of capitalism in shaping medical inequalities and what some groups viewed as medical imperialism. Drawing inspiration from the Black Panther Party's "Serve the People" programs, Asian Americans created a wide variety of community service initiatives and institutions, including legal counseling, cultural programming, and medical care. By 1969, Asian Americans had fully integrated healthcare into their political platforms as a right that belonged to them.

Drawing parallels to the Third World Liberation Front's characterization of their students as colonial subjects at San Francisco State, Asian American activists viewed the medical inequalities in their communities as a direct fault of American capitalism and exploitation.¹⁵ In 1971, the San Francisco Asian Community Health Clinic published an article in the *Wei Min She* newspaper that articulated the vision that many Asian American communities across California held about healthcare: "It is our firm belief that good and adequate medical attention is the right of everyone, regardless of one's income."¹⁶ Many of the founding statements of major Asian American organizations

centered around this perception presented by the *Wei Min She* in San Francisco, which also described racism in the United States as a “vicious claw of a monster” that created significant economic disparities between predominantly wealthy Anglo-Americans and poor Asian Americans.¹⁷ This belief in the right to culturally responsive and self-determined medical care served as the foundation for the institution-building that communities across California engaged in. These independent medical clinics and their commitment to provide free quality medical care for their communities faced numerous challenges, including insufficient funds, staffing shortages, and language barriers. In turn, activist groups employed various strategies to maintain operations at independent medical facilities, such as language training and outreach to Asian American college youth.

The lack of available medical care in their neighborhoods served as a major catalyst for the construction of medical facilities within ethnic enclaves. In 1969, San Francisco Chinatown, only one clinic provided outpatient care and had only one Chinese-speaking physician, significantly limiting the healthcare options for non-English-speaking Chinese.¹⁸ Attempting to alleviate the transportation and cultural barriers that many Asian Americans faced in receiving medical care, Asian activists gathered community funds and marginal federal funds to establish medical clinics in centralized areas within Chinatowns, Japantowns, and Little Manilas. In Los Angeles’s Japantown, Irene Inouye founded a community clinic that provided multilingual services in response to the need for an institution that emphasized the holistic cultural experiences that shaped patients’ outlook on health, rather than just providing essential health services.¹⁹ By expanding access to culturally-responsive healthcare, youth activists sought to create new institutions that placed medical power in the hands of marginalized and underserved populations.

Established in 1971 on Chinatown’s Pacific Avenue, the San Francisco Asian Community Health Clinic offered numerous free services to community members, such as glaucoma screenings and eyeglasses. Lacking adequate funding and resources, the clinic relied on community donations and volunteers to provide free medical care to Asian Americans. Before the clinic’s opening in 1972, volunteers assisted with an experimental glaucoma screening in 1970 to determine the volume of need among vulnerable Asian populations. After discovering that over 100 of the 174 people screened exhibited some form of eye problem, the Asian Community Health Clinic published a donation call for hearing aids and eyeglasses in the *Wei Min Newspaper*, citing a lack of funds as a major challenge.²⁰ Importantly, the *Wei Min Newspaper* had developed a strong coalition with major Asian American activist groups such as the Asian American Political Alliance, which consisted of students involved in the Third World Liberation Front strikes at San Francisco State College in 1968.

Even more notably, the *Wei Min Newspaper’s* advocacy for “Serve the People” programs widely appealed to activists protesting the evictions of Filipino and Chinese elderly from the International Hotel, located just one block away from the clinic.²¹ Similarly, *Synapse*, the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) student newspaper, published a call for volunteer health workers to assist in the operations of the clinic on October 29, 1971.²² Unlike the other University of California campuses, UCSF focused exclusively on health sciences education. Through their connections with UCSF students, activists encouraged medical trainees to volunteer at local community health clinics and helped sustain operations without the substantial funds needed to pay salaries. By strategically connecting with media outlets such as the *Wei Min Newspaper* and the University of California, San Francisco, activists creatively developed strategies to support and sustain the creation of an independent nonprofit medical clinic designed to “serve the people.”

In Stockton, Filipino Americans faced significant challenges due to the rise of urban redevelopment in the 1960s. This urban development led to the removal of many of Little Manila’s businesses and residences. Seeking to revitalize physical space for the Filipino community, various organizations and activist groups utilized the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968 to gather funds for the creation of a Filipino Center in the West End.²³ While the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) denied the feasibility of the project three times over the course of three years, negotiations between the six major Filipino organizations involved in further funding for the center, including the Filipino Medical and Allied Professions, and the FHA ultimately resulted in project approval in 1971. By 1972, the Filipino Medical Association had established a health clinic centered on deploying field nurses to the homes of Filipinos in the Stockton community.²⁴ Importantly, the Center also included 128 units of low-income

housing and 26,000 square feet of commercial space, providing a site of convenient medical care for Stockton's Filipino community.²⁵ For the Filipino American community of Stockton, the establishment of the Filipino Community Center represented an act of resistance against the destruction of Little Manila in the 1960s and a form of community pride. The inclusion of a health clinic within the center, serving both residents and outpatient visitors, reflected the growing need for community-based medical practice and the inseparable broader struggles.

Many clinics often failed to account for the role of reproductive health in shaping women's experiences in the 1960s and 1970s. Asian American women found that these clinics often failed to adequately address their unique circumstances, reproducing the patriarchal assumptions and silences surrounding women's bodies and health. Many young Asian American women lacked adequate social support in premarital pregnancy due to the social stigmatization from older Asian Americans. This social pressure, alongside a lack of institutional resources to support them, resulted in some women relying on self-abortion or unlicensed doctors for care.²⁶

Women also sought to create their own groups and clinics that focused specifically on issues that mattered most to them, such as reproductive health. While the Los Angeles-based activist journal *Gidra* occasionally included chauvinistic articles demeaning women's complaints about political exclusion and bodily autonomy, it also acted as a major outlet for Asian American women to learn about healthcare facilities aimed at addressing their specific needs. For instance, a brief article in a 1972 issue provided the perspective of an Asian counselor for family planning who argued that the cultural stigma of embarrassment from Asian immigrant parents prevented many women from accepting birth control treatment. At the end of the article, the counselor provided a list of free or low-cost clinics that members of the Los Angeles Asian American community approved for their culturally responsive and bilingual services.²⁷

In addition to providing information for women, some also took on greater roles in asserting their own bodily autonomy through self-help groups. In 1973, in Los Angeles, a group of women opened the Asian Women's Center (AWC), utilizing funds from the Asian Sisters group, a self-help drug abuse program. This center included a variety of services for young Asian women, such as workshops that taught women about birth control, pregnancy, and venereal disease, as well as referrals to approved cultural and gender responsive medical facilities.²⁸ In doing so, women not only sought to provide care that placed their needs first but also challenged male authority within the medical system by reframing medical self-help as political education, positioning them as producers of medical knowledge.

California's major Asian American communities also encountered substantial challenges due to operating as predominantly independent non-profit medical facilities. Because they relied heavily on volunteers, health clinics regularly struggled to fully staff their medical facilities. Although the Asian Community Health Clinic in San Francisco encouraged community members and medical students to volunteer, this strategy had minimal success. In their call for volunteers in *Synapse*, the UCSF student newspaper, the clinic outlined an ambitious plan to provide services three to four days a week and even on weekends.²⁹ The following year, *Synapse's* announcement of the clinic's opening revealed how understaffing and a lack of medical supplies likely undercut the goal of offering services on most days of the week. The newspaper reported that the clinic offered free medical services only on "Tuesday and Thursday evenings 7 to 10 p.m." and followed the announcement with a direct request for greater volunteer support.³⁰

These community clinics, largely operated by Asian American second-generation youth, often faced significant linguistic barriers when working with clients, even during operational hours. Upon graduating with her degree in psychology, Deborah Ching assisted as a social worker case aide at a psychiatric hospital in Los Angeles's Chinatown. Alongside other factors, Ching realized that she lacked the language capability to work closely with the local Chinese population, resulting in her departing the institution after two years.³¹ While Asian American activists initially drew inspiration from the Black Panther Party's community clinics, they found that linguistic barriers posed a unique and persistent challenge. With the growing influx of Asian immigrants after the passage of the 1965 Immigration Act, language barriers, coupled with the lack of funds to support these expanding populations in need, became a substantial obstacle to providing equitable and culturally responsive medical care. Recognizing

the various challenges that community health centers faced, activists mobilized to garner volunteer and monetary support for their initiatives. At UCSF, Asian American students sought to support community-based healthcare in the city through the Asian Health Caucus, a group focused on Asian American healthcare professional retention and related community health issues. Recognizing the importance of increasing bilingual staff, the Asian Health Caucus began offering conversational Cantonese courses in 1972 for students at the university.³²

The Asian Health Caucus also hosted panels and workshops on health issues in the community and culturally responsive health careers. Throughout the 1970s, this group attempted to reach out to local Asian American youth to generate interest in volunteering and directly working for community-based health centers. For instance, in 1976, the Caucus visited the City College of San Francisco to host a panel discussing health professions and career opportunities for Asian Americans.³³ The Caucus's mission of exposing students to a wide variety of professions and issues within local Asian American communities helped generate greater support, not only for community clinics, but also for the broader Asian American Movement. Even when students entered four-year institutions, Asian community activists continued to encourage youth involvement with Asian healthcare facilities. At the University of California, Davis, the Sacramento Asian Health Clinic participated in orientation sessions in 1975 and provided opening statements in a networking panel.³⁴ These connections provided students with two major benefits: the opportunity to gain great work experience in a field that often excluded them and a tangible way to give back to their communities. By exposing Asian American students to community-based healthcare institutions, activists sought to appeal to and create a newfound base of students who resonated with the disproportionate medical and socioeconomic inequalities that their communities faced. Through these methods, many Asian American community clinics and medical centers remained active within local communities throughout the 1970s, providing holistic, culturally responsive care for a previously ignored population.

On April 27, 1972, influential Asian and Pacific Islander American activists across the nation convened in Los Angeles for the First National Conference on Asian American Mental Health. With over 600 attendees, Asian American community leaders agreed that a wide variety of social inequalities and race-based factors contributed to declining mental health for Asians across the country, including drug abuse, substandard health services, and negative stereotyping of Asians in mass media. The conference committee's final report laid out numerous recommendations, one of which closely aligned with the goals of the Asian American movement: "All mental health programs in Asian American communities should be controlled by the 'grass roots' community people."³⁵ Unlike physical health facilities in Asian American communities, which largely targeted vulnerable populations overlooked by the government, such as children, the elderly, and agricultural laborers, youth activists created mental health self-help programs for all ages, including their own demographic. These programs aimed to support Asian Americans who felt isolated from American society due to stereotypes and negative images in the mass media and resorted to drug abuse or criminal gangs. In doing so, Asian American activists framed issues such as mass incarceration and drug abuse through the lens of American capitalism, arguing that socioeconomic systems placed Asian Americans in a cognitive dissonance regarding their place in society.

By the late 1960s, Asian American youth articulated a vision of mental health programs that focused on self-determined and culturally responsive care in response to growing needs for emotional support. For many activists, this understanding of mental health services required a sophisticated analysis of why so many Asian Americans suffered from mental health crises. The Los Angeles County Coroner's Office report revealed that between July 1, 1969, and June 30, 1971, 18 Asian Americans had died from drug overdose.³⁶ However, growing distrust in institutional research and medical expertise left activists unconvinced. Witnessing the continual reliance on drugs in their local communities, Asian American self-help groups found that in 1970 alone, at least 31 Asian Americans had lost their lives to drug overdose.³⁷ Local community youth members viewed drug abuse not only as an issue, but as a legacy of socioeconomic inequalities and cultural expectations of model Asian American behavior.

In an anonymous article written by an Asian high school student in *Gidra's* September 1971 issue, a student remarked that the verbal discrimination they encountered from white students and the continual images of Asian Americans as smart and obedient made them resent their Asian identity, resulting in them turning to drugs as a way of feeling equal.³⁸ The student's account reveals how the model minority myth functioned not as praise, but

as a cultural expectation that produced alienation amongst young Asian Americans. Stuck between perceptions of the model minority myth and the foreign alien enemy, Asian American youth experienced significant isolation and lacked adequate mental support to validate their cultural and racial identity.

Asian Americans increasingly turned to gang participation and drug use to cope with their cognitive dissonance, as they lacked positive institutions that affirmed their struggles. Marilynne Quon, activist and founder of Asian Sisters, a self-help group for women suffering from drug abuse, in Los Angeles, argued that Asian Americans relied on drugs and gang participation due to the lack of “positive identity and alternative cultural institutions” that reaffirmed Asian American experiences.³⁹ By the late 1960s, Asian American communities viewed Anglo-American expectations of Asians as a form of racial erasure and sought to create new institutions and programs that inspired youth to see significance in their identity and contribute meaningfully to their marginalized communities.

Similar to physical health facilities such as Oakland’s Asian Community Mental Health Services center, many activists viewed self-help organizations as a primary way of addressing declining mental health.⁴⁰ Particularly in large urban centers such as Los Angeles and San Francisco, Asian American youth, many of whom experienced the effects of drug abuse or knew others who suffered, mobilized to create self-help groups aimed to give youth reaffirming identity. Formed in 1969 in Los Angeles, the Yellow Brotherhood comprised a group of Asian American men who sought to provide support and mutual assistance for addicted members and those recovering from drug addiction, most notably through identity-affirming events such as rap sessions and community workshops.⁴¹ Within a year of the group’s formation, over 100 Asian Americans who dropped out of high school or suffered from drug abuse had received identity-affirming support, with six members committing to study at the University of California, Los Angeles through the Asian American High Potential Program.⁴² While activists viewed community-based health facilities as a response to health deficiencies caused by oppressive laws and exploitative labor relations, they viewed self-empowerment programs as a response to declining mental health and rising substance abuse caused by pressures to adhere to Anglo-American cultural and social expectations.

Asian Americans, who were deemed “model minorities” in the United States, because of their low crime levels, while drug abuse, gang violence, and rising incarceration rates soared in other minority communities. Unlike other groups, such as Mexican and African Americans, who experienced substantially higher rates of incarceration on account of drug offenses, much fewer Asian Americans faced punishment in penal institutions. These numbers proved so low that California Correctional Records categorized Asians under the “Other” category in reports. The California Rehabilitation Center reported that thirty-five people admitted to the institution fell under the “Other” category in 1972 and 1973.⁴³ These numbers reflected a similar trend across the state and in community activist journals. While these low incarceration rates may initially demonstrate that incarcerated Asian Americans had little significance in the consciousness of the movement’s health activism, activist journals expressed significant concerns over these groups. Many of *Gidra*’s issues in the early 1970s became littered with various critiques of the carceral system and its relation to drug abuse. For instance, Russel Valparaíso, a former inmate and Filipino American activist, wrote an article in the December 1970 issue that critiqued penal institutions for alienating and dehumanizing Asian American prisoners, resulting in many leaving prisons with no sense of belonging, employment, or opportunity.⁴⁴ Others described prisons as akin to Disneyland from the outside but “a site of caging where Asian brothers” felt isolated.⁴⁵ Low incarceration rates signaled that Asian prisoners experienced a lack of ethnic solidarity and an intensified sense of isolation within prison systems. Seeing incarcerated Asian Americans as a direct representation of the flaws of American capitalism and institutional racism, activists forged new self-help organizations to help incarcerated youth understand their unjust positionality in American society.

This broader relational critique between mass incarceration, drug abuse, and capitalism became a central understanding for the projects taken on by various self-help and empowerment groups, such as Asian American Hardcore and the Asian Joint Communications. Alongside working with youth who suffered from drug abuse in the community, these groups also sought to provide incarcerated Asian Americans a sense of community through workshops within local prisons. Asian Joint Communications outlined an emphasis on providing “the services necessary to enable a brother or sister to pursue an alternative lifestyle by redirecting their energies to the community.”⁴⁶ While much of their work focused on educating and culturally enriching the lives of incarcerated Asian

Americans, their ultimate goal centered on rehabilitating prisoners into reformed community activists who hoped to “tear down the walls of insensitivity, injustice, racism, oppression, human degradation, and sexism.”⁴⁷ In recalling her time as a student working with the Asian Joint Communications in Los Angeles, California, Representative Judy Chu found that the experience of working alongside other students and community members provided Asian American prisoners, who felt abandoned by society, a support network.⁴⁸

Lacking individuals from similar ethnic backgrounds and experiences, incarcerated Asian Americans found an opportunity to reconnect with their identity and understand how their experiences connected to systemic obstacles that contributed to declining self-worth. For instance, in 1972, the Asian Joint Communications visited the California Institute for Men and hosted a banquet and entertainment day for Asian American prisoners, providing a meaningful connection and recognition of the “psychological games played on the brothers” through the carceral system.⁴⁹ This goal, alongside the low number of Asian Americans within California prisoners, is to energize incarcerated youth through these coordinated events and workshops centered on teaching them about the institutional and cultural obstacles that caused them to feel isolated and unwanted from American society. In doing so, many incarcerated Asian Americans found new identities by understanding the intersections between their reliance on drugs and capitalism and institutional failures to serve their communities.

Similar to physical health, Asian American women created their own self-help mental support groups to recognize the “double oppressed” intersectional position that women faced from both Asian American men and Anglo-American women. In an attempt to answer the question of why Asian American women engage in drug abuse, Asian American Hardcore member June Miyaji begged readers to consider if the community makes women “feel wanted in the Asian American community.”⁵⁰ Experiencing male chauvinism from others in the movement and racism from white Americans who viewed them as docile and passive, Asian American women lived in “a suspension of existence and non-existence, approval and rejection.”⁵¹ Coroner reports also illustrated that these societal and cultural expectations, coupled with the lack of institutional support, posed a significant threat to the mental health of Asian women, who experienced drug overdose at three times the rate of their male counterparts in Los Angeles.⁵²

These groups sought not only to support Asian women in counseling, guidance, and education, but also hoped to politically mobilize women to recognize their own self-worth and counter social patriarchal views on women within Asian communities. In Los Angeles, Merilynne Hamano Quon created the self-help group Asian Sisters, a direct response to the emergence of the male-dominated Yellow Brotherhood. Asian Sisters recruited 150 members in the first year through its efforts to connect Asian women with professional counselors and its workshops, including a weekly parents’ group that attempted to bridge the communication and cultural gaps between older immigrant parents and Asian American youth.⁵³ In doing so, Quon and other activists created a safe space where women felt a newfound sense of community through shared similar experiences of sexism, racism, and culturally patriarchal imposed values.

These programs served not only to reduce deteriorating mental health in Asian American communities but also served as new channels of activist mobilization. Many of *Gidra*’s issues featured sections of letters addressed to the writers that often illustrated how self-help groups and community-based programs paved the way for a resilient consciousness and pride surrounding Asian American activism. For instance, numerous issues featured letters from incarcerated prisoners, such as Eugene Tsukimura, who received issues of *Gidra* through Asian American Hardcore, a self-help group for incarcerated Asian Americans. Tsukimura not only thanked them for providing the issues but also directly commented on debates surrounding the exclusion of certain Asian American and African American groups from the usage of the Long Beach Community Center, citing the controversial Japanese American Citizens League.⁵⁴ Letters from people such as Tsukimura indicate that the outreach efforts of these self-help groups helped many Asian American youth convert their reliance on drugs to productive community activism and political participation on key issues of the mainstream movement.

These self-help groups also directly engaged in community activist events that allowed indignant youth to express their frustrations with hegemonic American expectations of Asian Americans. During the 1971 Nisei Week parade, Japanese American women involved in Asian Sisters wore traditional Japanese kimonos alongside a float

of the Lilly Corporation, a manufacturer of secobarbital, a prevalent overdose drug for Asian Americans.⁵⁵ These engagements reveal the intricate ways in which mental health consciousness broadened community support and fostered greater political mobilization of Asian American communities against cultural and institutional inequalities that made Asian youth feel like second-class citizens.

By the late 1960s, Asian American activists in California had developed a pan-ethnic health-consciousness in response to institutional socioeconomic inequality and portrayals of Asian Americans as a model minority. As stated by Amy Uyematsu's piece in the seventh issue of *Gidra*, yellow power meant a rejection of institutional inequalities and a shift to "control the decision-making processes affecting their lives."⁵⁶ Through their experiences within ethnic enclaves across California, Asian American activists sought to create new institutions and programs of medical and mental health self-sovereignty. By doing so, Asian Americans used healthcare as a medium to express cultural autonomy, economic mobility, self-resiliency, and feminist ideology.

Clinics and self-help programs functioned as direct responses to the legacies of consumer capitalism, mass media, and social norms that undermined the experiences of impoverished Asian Americans. These institutions and programs acted as part of the general movement's broader "Serve the People" programs aimed to foster activism and reposition Asian American experiences into the broader institutional issues of the United States. More importantly, Asian American activists sought to reinvigorate and encourage groups ostracized by society, such as women, the elderly, and incarcerated youth. Recognizing the unique needs of these groups, activists contributed to a growing pan-Asian political identity that mobilized to create institutions that truly placed their needs into consideration. While the effectiveness of these programs and facilities remains open to question, they nevertheless demonstrate that medical activism played an integral role within the broader Asian American Movement's goals, not primarily through cultural politics, but through sustained institution-building.

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NO MUSIC, NO LIFE: THE RISE AND FALL OF TOWER RECORDS

SID AKBAR

Abstract: Tower Records was a global empire by the end of the twentieth-century, generating over a billion dollars in sales year after year. By 2006, it was bankrupt, its retail stores shuttered and its brand rights sold. This paper explores the rise and fall of Tower Records, through the cultural significance of record stores as community centers, the technological developments of cassettes tapes, CDs, and MP3s, and the economic impacts of industry decisions that directed consumers away from brick-and-mortar retail outlets, where they would purchase tangible, physical media, towards online marketplaces that allowed them to download digital media from the convenience of their home. By exploring internal financial records, interviewing their last CEO, and synthesizing scholarly research, this paper rejects the financial mismanagement conclusion the press offered at the time and proposes a unique interpretation to the collapse of Tower Records: a shift in consumer behavior.

In the late-twentieth century, Tower Records was an icon of the music retail industry. From its humble beginnings in 1941, in the back corner of a drug store in Sacramento, California, it would go on to operate more than two hundred stores in over eighteen countries.¹ The company's famous slogan, "No Music, No Life," captured how interlinked the business had become in the everyday life of music lovers. Each retail store also served as a community center, where music lovers would go to hang out and spend their spare time and spare money. For nearly six decades, Tower Records remained successful in evolving with both technology and market demand. Despite the business being founded on vinyl record sales, every time a new media format was introduced on the market, Tower Records readily adopted the changes. By 2000, the company was generating over a billion dollars in revenue year after year.²

Despite their success and adaptability over the years, navigating both the innovations of media technology and ever-changing tastes of listeners, the advent of digital media in the 1990s and its transformative impact on consumer behavior would be the cause of their demise. In particular, the shift from physical media to the MP3 digital format ushered in a change in consumer culture. Instead of heading down to your local brick-and-mortar record store to find the music they wanted, shoppers stayed at home and downloaded the singles or albums. This shift in behavior brought an end to the global empire Tower Records had created. Compounded by music downloads, heavy debt, and competition from discount retailers, Tower Records eventually sold its entire inventory and closed its final retail store in 2006. This essay examines the most common explanations, such as succumbing to new digital technology and unavoidable financial pressures and explores an alternative response: a cultural shift. It traces the rise and fall of Tower Records, including the risks it took and the challenges it faced. The shift in focus from physical to digital media ultimately influenced music consumption habits and led to the decline of Tower Records.

How did the most famous record shop company in the world go from earning billions to bankruptcy in just a few years? This essay addresses the most common explanations, including succumbing to novel digital technology and inescapable financial pressures, and explores a different response: a shift in culture. Using a mix of primary sources including articles, internal financial documents, public filings, films and documentaries videos, archival records, and personal interviews, this paper will map the rise and fall of Tower Records, as well as the risks it took and challenges it succumbed to. Secondary sources and scholarly research help frame the organization of this paper into three main sections, cultural significance, technological developments, and financial challenges. Each section explores how decisions made by the music industry affected Tower Records as well as its customers. However successful the company had been at adapting to ever-evolving music tastes and media technology, in most cases thriving on new market demands, this paper contends that the shift from physical media to digital media ultimately affected the behavior of music consumption in a way that led to the demise of Tower Records. Digital Media in the form of the MP3 provided instant online access to singles and albums from the comfort of home, making brick-and-mortar retailer industry obsolete. One of the negative consequences of this shift was the loss of face-to-face interactions with retail clerks, famous at Tower Records for being music aficionados, who could help customers explore new artists and genres. Without physical media, physical locations became unnecessary, and all the social and cultural

engagement that was associated with a record store was lost as well. As this paper will contend, Tower Records was more than just a retail business; it was a community center.

Although Tower Records had stores all over the world, its global empire was launched in Sacramento, California. How was it that a worldwide behemoth like Tower Records managed to take off from such a relatively small market? Analysis of local markets and the regional influence of greater cultural centers nearby, like San Francisco during the 1960s, helps to explain how the music retailer was able to thrive in and expand out of Sacramento.³ The countercultural revolution of the period and rise of rock and roll are essential to the story of the success of Tower Records. Furthermore, radio stations during the 1960s were localized, with their track rotation reflecting the listeners' tastes and the audience were able to directly influence the DJs themselves.⁴ This connection between the community and the radio stations they tuned into helped boost sales at local music retailers.

Another unique feature of the time was that record stores were the most common place to purchase concerts tickets. Fans of live music queued up to buy these tickets at brick-and-mortar shops, providing a direct connection between audiences and the artists they listened to. Michael Solomon, the last CEO of Tower Records before they went under, believes that one of the reasons music sales declined in the 1990s was the conglomeration of radio music. As the twentieth century ended, smaller regional broadcasters were bought up by bigger national corporations. With the change of ownership, instead of local rotation reflecting regional tastes, national radio networks played the same music by the same artists across the country.⁵ This influenced consumer tastes as well as distanced local radio stations from their communities.

Scholars, journalists, and economists have all made attempts to explain the decline of physical media retailers. Upon reflection, the collapse of video rental stores like Blockbuster Video seems inevitable with the advent of streaming digital video, but it's harder to apply the same principle to the record store. The role of the record shop was considerably different than that of the video store. The most comprehensive and insightful research on the impact of digital media on music consumption was written by David Arditi in *ITake-over: The Recording Industry in the Digital Era*, where the author explains how the industry shifted its practices in music recording, production, and distribution. The effects of this shift also led to the change in consumer behavior. Digital media technology by itself did not precipitate the demise of the music retailer. It was the practice of discovering and listening to music online that changed consumer culture. Online music listeners disconnected from brick-and-mortar locations, which in turn diverted consumer behavior from a social experience to an isolated one. The development of devices like mobile cassettes and CD players (and later MP3 players), coupled with headphones, further individualized music listening experiences. This isolated experience was quite different from the collective experience of listening to music together, through living room systems, at discotheques, or other social environments.

Studies conducted on the demise of the media retailers include those that have analyzed the cultural impact of digital media. Jeremy Wade Morris astutely describes this change in consumerism as "Formatting Culture."⁶ Morris invokes the word "formatting" in two ways. The first can be interpreted as the media format, such as vinyl, cassette, or compact disc. The second is the process of erasing all the data on a digital medium, such as formatting a disc or hard drive. By using the phrase formatting culture, Morris argues that technological changes adopted by the industry had a direct impact on people's behavior as purchasers. Throughout this essay, the language of formatting culture will be used to encapsulate the influence that technology had on altering consumer behavior.

Behavior is, however, an unusual explanation for why record stores have gone the way of zeppelin.⁷ Most scholars approach the demise of media retailers from a more economic perspective. Noting that music sales peaked in 1999, a study titled *In A Curious Mix of People: The Underground Scene of '90s Austin*, features a chapter exploring the challenges faced by a shifting music-consuming public and its impact on retail sales, both in person and online.⁸ This comparative analysis clearly exposed an inverse relationship between the rise in online single sales and the decline in retail CD sales. Other researchers emphasize that because cyber sales hold no geographic boundaries, online retailers had unrestricted access to their customers.⁹ No longer restrained by distance, the consumer was freed to shop from the comfort of their home, producing change in their behavior. Certainly, this change was influenced by the technology, but nevertheless a shift in behavior occurred.

So why is it that in Japan, for example, music retailers including those with the Tower Records brand name continue to thrive well into the time of this publication? This question addresses different cultural values between Americans and Japanese, which is beyond the scope of this paper. Although such an understanding between these two cultures could reinforce the argument that record stores in the United States have disappeared due to the behavior of American consumers, Japan will only be referred to in historical connection with Tower Record stores opened abroad.



Figure 1. Sacramento, California – Inside of Tower Records store at Watt Avenue photograph, ca. 1960-1968. Courtesy of the Center of Sacramento History.

Record stores were more than simply brick-and-mortar retailers. Unlike video and DVD retailers, most record stores also operated as ad hoc community centers for casual listeners, aficionados, and musicians as well. Tower Records' role as a cultural hub was arguably greater than any of its competitors. This did not happen as a historical accident contingent on circumstances beyond consumers or retailers. It was an active process; the role of a community center that a Tower Records store came to represent did not rise like the sun at an appointment time.¹⁰ Again, the company began as a vinyl record retailer but quickly expanded the variety of products it offered. Like most record stores, Tower Records extended its merchandise offerings to include music-related paraphernalia such as posters, t-shirts, and concert tickets along with vinyl, cassette, CD, and DVD catalogs. The more the company offered, the larger the customer base and the longer they stayed and browsed.

Employees also held considerable freedom on stocking shelves, often promoting local artists.¹¹ This prompted local bands to come into the shop and promote sales by either performing at the Tower Records store, leaving a stack of flyers for upcoming gigs, or both. Soon, record store counters and cork boards became prominent locations for consumers to find shows, audition for a band, or pick up a copy of an independently produced zine. The company found a new purpose for its brick-and-mortar location and welcomed the opportunity. Between the shows, flyers, zines, and the extended music-related merchandise, more people came and stayed longer, likely to buy something. To better understand how this developed, it is essential to look at how it all started.

The origin of Tower Records is almost mythically humble. Officially, the company incorporated in 1960 as MTS, Inc. Russ Solomon, the founder, while still a teenager in 1941, began selling records out of his father's shop, Tower Drugs, located on 16th Street and Broadway in Sacramento. His budding business was put on a brief hiatus when World War II called Solomon into service. After completing his tours and then quickly dropping out of college, Solomon returned to his father's drug store and resumed selling records. Between 1947 and 1953, his business was outperforming his father's. Solomon bought the business from his dad and rebranded it as Tower Record Mart, now focused exclusively on vinyl records. Almost immediately, Solomon also opened a vinyl warehouse store across the street called Record Supply, which sold wholesale to jukebox operators and stocked the racks of box retailers from Sacramento to San Francisco, including major department stores such as Grant's, Woolworths, Payless, and Thrifty.¹² The wholesale operation was less profitable than the retail store and soon record distributors and creditors seized both Record Supply's and Tower Record Mart's inventory, liquidating the assets to cover unresolved debt.

Undaunted, Solomon "borrowed" five-thousand dollars from his father and started his own company, MTS Inc., named after the initials of his eldest son, Michael Toby Solomon, and opened the first Tower Records in 1960 at a retail space next to the brand new Country Club Lanes on Watt Avenue and El Camino Boulevard.¹³ This five-thousand square foot warehouse would become an instant success. The adage of "being at the right place at the right time" came to fruition because the music scene was on the cusp of a cultural revolution. By the early 1960s, rock and roll was gaining popularity. Beginning with the Beach Boys, The Beatles, and Peter, Paul, and Mary, vinyl records would start flying off the shelves.

Music was central to the countercultural revolution. Noted in *Australian Quarterly*, "Young people danced to rock and roll, and there was functionality to this relationship. From the mid-1950s to the mid-1970s, popular music was of use to young people. It provided a way to define and redefine their *social environment*."¹⁴ What is important to emphasize here is that music brought young people together as a community. The term "social environment" encapsulates the culture created by young people's relationship to music, not as an individual experience but a shared one. They listened to music in groups, on their record player at home or on the radio while in their cars. Radio was an important source for new and popular music. And the relationship between stations and the communities they served went both ways. Local DJs listened to their audience and mingled with them. One of Sacramento's prominent DJs at the time, Buck Herring of KROY, tried to play the music his listeners wanted to hear.¹⁵ The music played and listened to represented the culture, each other, their community, sometimes the open road, the beach, freedom, and, most of all, romance. Baby boomers were coming of age, and rock and roll was their vanguard. Their music was part and parcel to their social experiences.

The explosion of rock and roll music was good for business. It was the perfect time for Tower Records at its new location on Watt and El Camino, and business was booming. Soon, there were three branches in Sacramento: the original location on Broadway, the Watt and El Camino store, and its newest store on Florin Road. Yet, even with all the success of these record stores, Russ Solomon had a bigger vision. His dream was to open the world's largest record store. That dream came true several times. First in 1968, when he opened another Tower Records store on Bay and Columbus in San Francisco and, as Solomon recalls, "the place was swarmed."¹⁶ Albums began flying off the shelves. Sales correlated with the artists that popular radio stations played on heavy rotation such as The Beatles, Herman's Hermits, Ike and Tina Turner, as well as other rising rock and roll acts.

1968 was also the year that *Billboard* magazine first featured Russ Solomon and Tower Records.¹⁷ The magazine recognized the success of his dream, that Solomon's creation of a vinyl record superstore was exactly the kind of business young people wanted. Like the store in Sacramento, Tower Records in San Francisco was the place to hang out, to find music and to find each other. From the late 1960s onwards, Tower Records "provided a unique common ground for people of varied tastes and interests."¹⁸ The counterculture revolution was taking place, and music was at the vanguard. With retail stores in San Francisco and in Sacramento, Tower Records became a center for the counterculture.¹⁹ Other record chains, like Virgin Records, modeled themselves after Tower Records with huge inventories and low prices.²⁰ Although some retailers eventually grew larger and earned more, none ever matched the mystique of Tower Records. Once they opened their Hollywood location, casual customers could find themselves

rubbing elbows with famous artists like Bruce Springsteen, Elton John, The Eagles, and even Michael Jackson, all of whom were drawn to Tower Records to shop their vast inventory or see their own records on display.²¹

Tower Records soon dominated the west coast market, with stores in Arizona, Washington, Oregon, and California. Chance would have it that before they conquered the East Coast, Tower Records would go international. On a trip to Japan, Solomon found an opportunity to go global, and little did he know how successful this venture would be. In 1979, Tower Records opened its first international store in Tokyo, Japan.²² The Japanese market would instantly become their most lucrative and stay that way until the end.²³ The cashflow from Japan further fueled Solomon's dream to bigger and farther. In 1983, he set his eyes on New York City, where Tower Records opened the biggest record store ever at that point in history. At twenty-five thousand square feet, and four stories, Tower Records in Manhattan would be the largest physical location of any record retailer for its time.²⁴ Much like its Hollywood location, the public would flock to Tower Records just for the chance to rub elbows with famous musicians or simply hang out and discover new music. In the early 1980s, the company opened its British operation with a mega store at #1 Picadilly Circus, securing its place on the world map with branches in New York, London, and Tokyo. By 1986, the local press was hailing Tower Records as an empire.²⁵ What started off as a teenager's love of music, selling singles in his father's drug shop in a small town, had become a global phenomenon. With the world conquered, it was time to evolve beyond just selling music.

By the 1980s, Tower Records had expanded into other physical media retail ventures, the most prominent of which were Tower Books and Tower Video. Riding the coattails of the record store's fame, both the books and the video divisions became successful. Although not quite on par with its record department, both Tower Books and Tower Video also expanded across the country, opening branches in major metropolitan areas. In 1991, Russ Solomon was selected as the "Billboard-Time Video Man of the Year."²⁶ Notable in that *Billboard* coverage was Solomon's leadership style, where he would allow management to retain autonomy in how best to run each local store based on local needs.²⁷ Once again, Tower Records, Books, and Video all met the needs of their local community. By creating a fun, hip space for young people to hang out, the various Tower enterprises served a role far beyond any other retailer. They were community centers and cultural hubs. The *Billboard* article goes on to mention how turnover among managers was much lower compared to other music and video retailers.

In 1995, the Hollywood release of cult classic *Empire Records* would cement the image of record store culture in the popular imagination. The screenplay was written by Carol Heikkinen, a former employee of Tower Video, and was based on her experience working as a store clerk. *Empire Records* is a coming-of-age story whose climactic scene is an impromptu concert on the roof of the record store meant to raise money from the community to save the business from being sold.²⁸ This movie captures the zany antics of real-life staff, as well as the equally wild clientele recognizing and honoring the record store and the role it serves its patrons as a community center.

The late 90s would also see further expansion and development for Tower Records.²⁹ Once again breaking their own record in Manhattan, the retail empire opened a gargantuan retail facility on March 10 in Tokyo, spanning eight stories and hailed as the largest record store in the world at fifty-two thousand square feet – more than double the size of their New York branch.³⁰ The more stores they opened, the more revenue they made. In 1997, continuing its domination of the global market, Tower Records opened a branch in Buenos Aires, Argentina, much to the fanfare of the local music lovers. Once again, local autonomy provided to management allowed the curators to stack culturally relevant records on their shelves. But something else happened in 1997. For the first time since it was incorporated, Tower Records did not make a profit. With nearly exponential growth for decades, 1997 was the first year the company lost money. Although in the following years record-breaking sales returned, peaking at a billion dollars annually, things were going to change very quickly, and for the worse.

Unknown to Solomon, the 1990s would be the swan song of Tower Records. Rising costs of operation, high rent for retail spaces, and unmanageable debt incurred while opening new branches, were compounded by competition from online retailers and discount stores. The low cost of production and distribution of digital media like CDs and DVDs allowed all manners of retailers, from Best Buy and Target to dollar markets and liquor stores, to stock them on their shelves. Such spurious market competition would format the culture of music retailing in such

a way in which Tower Records was unable to compete against. By the time the last Tower Records store closed in 2006 in the United States, each store was recognized as “a cultural hub; a place to meet friends, peruse video and artist merchandise, check out music magazines from all over the world, and occasionally see a live show.”³¹ The loss of such an institution meant the loss of the record store culture. The scene was gone. Although the music was still there, where was the life?

Throughout the decades during which Tower Records operated, new types of physical media were constantly developing. The industry experimented with new media formats and searched for new ways for consumers to listen to music beyond unwieldy and fragile vinyl records. The biggest problem that the industry needed to solve was how to play music in a car. Clearly, records were out of the question, since the slightest bump on the road would cause the needle to skip. Whatever this product would be, it needed to be smaller and more durable than the brittle vinyl record.

Using the science of reel-to-reel tapes, the first mainstream solution was the eight track, and, of course, eight-track players. Commonly referred to as decks, eight track players were installed on the consoles of automobiles, for the first time allowing passengers to listen to the music of their choice instead of the radio. The music was stored on durable magnetic tape, which was stored on reel within the housing of the eight-track cassette, protecting it from exposure and effectively solving the danger of skipping needles. From here, many other formats were quickly adopted, built upon, and relegated to obsolescence in quick succession. These formats include the cassette tape, the laser disc, and the compact disc (CD) and digital video disc (DVD).

Despite these developments, record store retailers like Tower Records survived and even thrived. By changing their inventory, record stores could meet the demands of consumers. Often, clients bought the latest format of albums they already owned, just to make sure they had one for home, one for the car, and one for their fancy new CD player. The industry was formatting culture by creating new mediums for music playback. Yet the one feature that all these formats had in common was that they were all physical media, tactile, and tangible, even the digital formats of CDs and DVDs. It was not until the end of the twentieth century when most media transitioned from physical copies to digital files available online, for download and streaming, that saw the true demise of not just the record store, but video and book retailers as well. Within a span of a few years, retailers lost thirty to forty percent of their sales revenue.³² Online music was not tangible, you could not go out to the store and get your hands on it. You only needed to go online. This new online activity was an individual and isolated experience of music consumption but was not the first. The slippery slope to an individualized music experience began almost two decades earlier.

One of the earliest technological developments that began the shift towards an individualized music listening experience was the introduction of Sony's Walkman. This device was a battery-operated cassette player that came with its own headphones. Music could now follow the listener anywhere and was not shared by anyone else except the person wearing the headphones.³³ In terms of sales, the Walkman was a huge success, and Sony's business skyrocketed, giving them financial dominance of the mobile music player market, and allowing to diversify into other electronic markets like televisions and video game consoles. Although battery operated cassette players existed before Sony's Walkman, they were huge boom boxes with built-in speakers, loud enough to fill up a small dance hall. The Walkman was the first and most successful portable personal device of its kind. Within a decade of its introduction, cassettes were beginning to be replaced with the more sonically pleasing CD, to which Sony released the Discman portable player. CDs soon gained market share but much like vinyl records, cassettes never truly disappeared. Some consumers just preferred the sound or feeling of one medium over another. To this day people have vinyl collections they continue to add to, and others still prefer the romance of making mixtapes on cassettes. In recent years, the popularity of cassette tapes has made a resurgence after the release of Marvel's *Guardians of Galaxy* and music videos from Frank Ocean.³⁴ This phenomenon highlights how the music industry continues to format culture, this time using pop music to influence consumer behavior.

Despite the success of the Walkman and preeminence of CDs, record stores still thrived. Whatever the customer wanted, Tower Records had it, in vinyl, eight track, cassette, or CD, depending on the era. As long as the medium was physical, customers had to get out of the house and walk in through the front doors of a brick-and-

mortar building to lay their hands on the singles and albums they wanted. While they were there, they might meet or make a friend. Perhaps they would pick up a show flyer from a stack left on the counter, or even a homemade zine. One could spend a moment or two looking at posted bills for upcoming gigs or an audition for a band. If they were lucky, a band might just be setting up to play a free show. Many adventures awaited the customer when he walked into Tower Records retail store.

By experimenting with cheaper and faster ways to produce, duplicate, and distribute music, the music industry developed the MP3. Within a few years before the new millennium, radio stations replaced their entire physical libraries with one hard drive. Not only did this reduce the space taken up by CDs and records but it also streamlined playback. In that same span of years consumers found software that could “rip” the MP3 file from a CDs into their computers and then burn them onto blanks CDs. Once they ripped enough songs they could upload their entire collection of a peer-to-peer (p2p) file sharing software and, suddenly, millions of songs were available to the public for free. Many former patrons of record stores began to download their music illegally, pirating them off of popular p2p software of the early twenty-first century, such as Napster and LimeWire.

Napster was launched in 1998, and quickly ushered in the era of music piracy that led the demise of legal transactions, including legal, paid for downloads of MP3s.³⁵ Music lovers who used p2p client software would burn pirated MP3s off of the internet on CD or download them into the latest portable music players devices that came with built in hard drives designed specifically for storing and playing MP3s, like the Apple’s iPod or Microsoft’s Zune.³⁶ But why would a music lover hurt the artist they are fans of by stealing their music instead paying for it, even nominally? Jeremy Wade Morris offers an opinion on the mindset of music pirates, who are “drawn together by their illicit or anticorporate behavior.”³⁷ Inevitably, the proliferation of online digital music led to a direct decline in CD sales, affecting brick-and-mortar record stores’ revenue. Once again, the culture of music consumption was being formatted.

Even though digital downloads, both legal and pirated, hurt record stores revenue, overall sales for Tower records continued to climb. But beginning in 1995, that sale growth slowed considerably.³⁸ In 1998, Russ Solomon decided to hand over the position of Chief Executive Officer to his son, Michael. The younger Solomon had been the chief legal counsel for MTS Inc. since 1987. The change in leadership was in title only, the nature of the company remained same, led by Russ. The elder Solmon remained Chairman of the board, and continued to direct the company, with attempts at diversifying, developing a department store style of retailer where you could purchase music, books, cassettes and their players, speakers, boomboxes, and mp3 players all in one superstore location.³⁹ Even with the foresight of launching their own online presence at www.tower-records.com, the company was unable to compete against free file-sharing platforms that allowed consumers to pirate music online. And it was not just piracy. The practice of purchasing single online, instead of albums, commonly known as “unbundling,” was also a factor in the decline of Tower Records.⁴⁰ So why was it that Tower Records remained profitable with all the previous innovation in physical media but failed once the MP3 dominated market share? Even when their stores sold MP3 players and MP3s were available at nominal prices on their website? Again, the argument presented here states that the collapse of Tower Records has less to do with the format of the technology, specifically the MP3, but more so with the formatting of culture.

In several articles published in the early 2000s, Russ Solomon downplayed the danger of online retailers. When asked about the future of music consumers in *Billboard* magazine, Solomon insisted the retailers have always existed as physical locations and predicted that that was how it would stay.⁴¹ He was not entirely wrong. People still have their collections, albums, and mixtapes except so much of it is digital. Whether it is music, movies, photographs, or even books, the phenomenon of curating collections and playlists continues, only now they are streamed from the cloud and accessed on portable devices such as laptops, tablets, and smart phones. James R. Hagerly of the *Wall Street Journal* noted that Solomon downplayed the threat of streaming music in the digital era, but neither of them knew how wrong he would be.⁴² While underestimating the danger of streaming in the digital era seems naïve, we must remember that Russ Solomon began selling records in 1941. In hindsight, the demise of brick-and-mortar retailers was inevitable. But at the time, who could have said that digital media is the sole reason for the death of Blockbuster Video and Tower Records? What if consumers continued to find community and connection at the

physical locations, despite the products becoming digital or not. If music lovers continued to support the establishment by showing up in person, the format of the media would not matter. Again, it is the change in behavior, the formatting of culture, where the music buyer does not have to go anywhere to access the music they want. Without customers, all companies collapse.

In August of 2002, *The Sacramento Bee* reported that Tower Records had to close six stores across the United Kingdom and Ireland after losing one-hundred and thirty million dollars in sales to online competition and discount retailers.⁴³ By October, they were forced by bond holders and banks to sell their most profitable branches in Japan for one-hundred and twenty-one million dollars.⁴⁴ The creditors hired a management company to take over the operations. In 2003, without any control or power to make decisions without the management company's approval, Michael Solomon left the business his father started in the 1940s.

Year	Gross Sales	Annual Growth	Annual Percent
1978	\$44,221,578.00	--	--
1979	\$55,235,793.00	\$11,014,215.00	24.91%
1980	\$72,950,224.00	\$17,714,431.00	32.07%
1981	\$86,812,850.00	\$13,862,626.00	19.00%
1982	\$98,615,641.00	\$11,802,791.00	13.60%
1983	\$111,168,915.00	\$12,553,274.00	12.73%
1984	\$146,550,368.00	\$35,381,453.00	31.83%
1985	\$187,369,605.00	\$40,819,237.00	27.85%
1986	\$225,845,092.00	\$38,475,487.00	20.53%
1987	\$302,863,567.00	\$77,018,475.00	34.10%
1988	\$375,824,953.00	\$72,961,386.00	24.09%
1989	\$415,231,292.00	\$39,406,339.00	10.49%
1990	\$480,432,058.00	\$65,200,766.00	15.70%
1991	\$554,535,346.00	\$74,103,288.00	15.42%
1992	\$618,456,192.00	\$63,920,846.00	11.53%
1993	\$681,412,713.00	\$62,956,521.00	10.18%
1994	\$790,892,818.00	\$109,480,105.00	16.07%
1995	\$933,904,285.00	\$143,011,467.00	18.08%
1996	\$1,001,034,830.00	\$67,130,545.00	7.19%
1997	\$991,810,010.00	-\$9,224,820.00	-0.92%
1998	\$1,008,146,000.00	\$16,335,990.00	1.65%
1999	\$1,026,400,000.00	\$18,254,000.00	1.81%
2000	\$1,099,900,000.00	\$73,500,000.00	7.16%

Table 1. Financial Data collected from Annual Reports of Coopers and Lybrand L.L.P., Consolidated Financial Statement and Supplemental Information, August 1979 to August 2000. Archival documents accessed courtesy of the Center for Sacramento History.

By the end of the century, Tower Records reported gross sales of over a billion dollars a year. This includes 1996, 1998, 1999, and 2000.⁴⁵ Of course, it did not start off so successfully. The earliest comprehensive financial analysis comes from the company's 1978 annual report. The reported gross sales were an impressive \$44.2 million. But what is truly remarkable is the consistent growth based on revenue from every following the previous except for 1997.⁴⁶ Table 1 displays the years, gross revenue, and annual growth in both dollars and percent. The driving force behind the company's growth was its expansion into new markets every year. Every time Tower Records opened a new retail location, even after the high capital outlay in opening a new store, these branches were immediately profitable.

Unfortunately, gross sales do not guarantee profit as proved by the fact that Tower Records began to struggle financially. Their biggest expense was the cost of merchandise, meaning physical media, records, cassettes, CDs, DVDs, posters, t-shirts, et al. After product costs are subtracted from the sales, gross profit was only a fraction of their revenue. Finally, overhead and operations expenses, especially rental fees, depreciation, wages, and salaries

cut into profits so deep, that paying ten percent interest on one hundred million dollars of debt was beyond the company's capacity to stay afloat. Both the elder and younger Solomon continued to believe that the only way to continue succeeding was to open new stores, but creditors and lenders took over the company's management and spent valuable money on what they thought would work best: buying new computers systems and updating infrastructure. Their ideas did nothing to increase sales.⁴⁷ There were a few disaster stores as well. Several operations in New York and Toronto were not profitable. High start-up investments and rental expenses locked up too much capital and cost the company more than it was worth to keep them open. Bad decisions were also made in opening stores in Mexico and Argentina. Both countries' economies collapsed and their currencies lost value for Tower Records financiers.

Early in the company's history, lenders and banks were eager to support Tower Records. Despite the low net profits, the public image of the company was larger than life. Executives and management were partying with rock stars and record company executives, collecting luxury cars, and flying all over the world to find the next hit Tower Records location.⁴⁸ At the zenith of the company, there were over two hundred Tower Records retail stores in eighteen countries. Longtime Chief Financial Officer, Walter "Bud" Martin was known to be frugal and the counter to Russ Solomon's extravagant ways. Martin was endearing referred to as the "No Man," while Solomon, the "Yes Man," was always open to ideas that may increase the brands profitability despite the capital outlay. Even with these apparent antagonist roles, both Martin and Solomon worked effectively and congenially enough to launch the global empire that Tower Records would come to represent.⁴⁹ Whenever Solomon needed money for a new store, Martin found a way, usually through bank loans. This relationship was between the banks and Tower Records worked for both companies throughout the last quarter of the twentieth century. However, the advent of digital media in CDs and DVDs, cheaper to produce and distribute, allowed competitors the opportunity to cut into Tower Records market share.

While taking loans to open new stores was a win-win partnership between MTS Inc. and lenders for decades, competition from discount stores like Best Buy and online retailers like Amazon started cutting into profits. Even with the arrival of MP3s, sales at Tower Records were still climbing. But sales do not translate to profit. With the cost of merchandise, rent, and other expenses, Tower Records' profit margins shrank. Once the lenders saw the risk was too great, Tower Records had to resort to a new way to raise capital: they began selling bonds. By 2000, the retail giant had amassed a debt of over one hundred million dollars. With annual interest rates of ten percent, the company was unable to remain viable.⁵⁰

There is no single factor that claims responsibility for the loss in sales. Between retail competitors such as discount stores and every liquor store stocking CDs and DVDs, and the new online presence of p2p file sharing of singles, consumers were simply just not going to the record store anymore. In 2003, *Marketing Matters* published a study of Tower Records' online sales and concluded that it failed because of two main reasons. First, they came into the cyber retail space too late, after other competitors had already established their online presence. Second, they limited their sales to North America only.⁵¹ What if Tower Records had invested earlier in an online presence? How much longer would they have been able to stay afloat? Would the company need to diversify in the digital realm like they did in the physical media world? While we can never know if this was inevitable for the record company, in February of 2003, MTS Inc. filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection.⁵²

For Tower Records, "No Music, No Life" may have been a self-fulfilling prophecy. Originally meant to celebrate the connection between the joy of music and quality of life, the slogan now seems like an ominous prediction applied to the company itself. Yet, music and life are thriving; the record stores are not. Billions of users have created custom playlists on digital streaming services such as Spotify, Pandora, Deezer, SoundCloud, Treble, and YouTube Music, among many others. And this list is just for listening to music. If we consider how much digital media is consumed through video streaming, online gaming, eBooks, and newsprint, it's no wonder why physical media retailers have all but disappeared.

It is not that music is not available, or that record stores disappeared and so consumers went online. Rather, it's the other way around. Music is everywhere, easier to discover and listen to than ever before. The world's catalogue is at our fingertips, and we do not need to go out or even get up to find it. What changed was the culture.

The shift in consumer behavior killed the brick-and-mortar record store. The death of the record store meant the death of the cultural hub and the of role community center it played. According to Michael Solomon, the demise of Tower Records was the result of a "perfect storm." The three factors that he attributes to bringing the company down include radio and concert conglomeration, digital downloads, and discount retailers.⁵³ Combined, these market forces created conditions that Tower Records could not compete with. Around the time the company filed bankruptcy, the press focused solely on its struggle with creditors. While it seems obvious that Tower Records went under because they could not remain profitable what often gets ignored is the change in consumer behavior. The shift from physical media to digital media was a death blow to many retailers, not just record stores but book shops, video rental companies, and even newspapers and magazines.

By the beginning of the twenty-first century, increasingly Americans were browsing the internet to read the news, watch movies and TV shows, and listen to music. With near instantaneous results and a virtually unlimited catalog, brick-and-mortar retailers could not compete with the new online market. Jerome Hendricks notes, "Without question, our ability to locate and consume music via the Internet has irrevocably disrupted the exchange *relationships* between music producers, retailers, and consumers."⁵⁴ It is our relationship with industry and community that has affected our behavior. The behavior, now isolated and individualized, is the reason American consumers no longer go to the record store. Without a culture of appreciation for the community, a cultural hub like Tower Records could no longer survive. Yet the company still thrives, if in name only, in countries like Ireland and Japan, with over seventy-five Tower Records retail stores around the world.⁵⁵ If culture has truly been formatted, then perhaps it has only been formatted in the United States. Only with further study on how record stores have managed to stay profitable in other parts of the world can a better understanding of what drives our behavior as consumers be discovered.

Who is to say they may never return? Until then, one can only lament a generation that listens to music alone. With network conglomerates pushing the same music across the country, what hope of young people have to create a counterculture rooted in music? One can hope for the return of a community center that serves a cultural hub based around music, where hours could be spent browsing records, heeding the expertise of aficionado clerks and lay listeners alike, perhaps discovering something new, not programmed by industry, not streaming on some disconnected online platform, but in the flesh. Such a place where one could come to know music, know life.



Figure 2. Dublin, Ireland – Photo taken by the author in December 2025, after stumbling upon by complete accident one of the two independently operating Tower Records stores in Dublin. The author is the luckiest person he knows. Courtesy of the author.

Biography: Sid Akbar is an immigrant, polyglot, global citizen, and failed rock star, and has been teaching high school since 2007. Sid's research focuses on world history, post-colonial studies, maritime history, the Indian Ocean, and subaltern perspectives. Despite his field of study, editors prefer to publish the papers he writes on rock and roll. Go figure. He is currently in his final semester towards earning his master's in history at Sac State and dreams of completing a PhD to become a world history lecturer, the next best thing to being a rock star.

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SACRAMENTO'S CONSPIRACY TRIAL: THE RHETORIC AND REALITY OF COMMUNISM IN THE GREAT DEPRESSION CENTRAL VALLEY

JULIAN QUINN

Abstract: This paper explores the role of communist ideology in the 1935 trial of agricultural union organizers in Sacramento. The trial occurred in the context of the tumultuous labor movement in the Great Depression Central Valley and the violent grower reaction to worker militancy. Drawing on oral histories, court records, and periodicals, this paper argues that framing union organizing as alleged preparation for communist revolution was a useful strategy both for radicals capitalizing on worker discontent and conservatives playing on Red Scare hysteria. Thus, the Communist Party's supporters and enemies alike exaggerated communism's importance to the union movement. While workers, employers, public officials, and union leaders found in communist rhetoric a useful means for expressing their bitter antagonism, that same rhetoric masked a more prosaic reality of a desperate struggle for wages and working conditions followed by ruthless repression.

In the 1930s, the Communist Party of the USA (CP) was winning major victories in California's Central Valley. The CP formed its own unions, organizing previously non-unionized agricultural workers in the California heartland. At the same time, it maintained links to labor actions that rose to unprecedented intensity with the long-shoremen's strike in San Francisco in 1934. Within a few years, the party found itself catapulted to importance in Northern California labor disputes. Growers, vigilantes, and law enforcement mounted a violent response, culminating in the Sacramento trial of eighteen CP members, all of whom had played some role in the CP farmworkers' union, on charges of criminal syndicalism. Many observers on both the left and right interpreted this tumultuous case, which sprawled across six months in 1934 and 1935, as putting communism itself on trial—as a verdict on the legality, and perhaps even viability, of communist politics in one of the most heated labor environments in America. Though communism played a prominent role in the rhetoric surrounding the trial, most of the people and organizations involved had non-ideological motives. Central Valley growers emphasized the union's communist connections to justify their campaign against labor, while radical organizations had more concern for their continued growth and prestige than the outcome of the prosecution. Farm workers and many union organizers used the communist presence to advance their interests without committing themselves to radical ideology.

This paper explores the trial of eighteen communists which newspapers misleadingly dubbed the "Conspiracy Trial." The first part of the paper establishes the conditions in which the CP intervened in the struggles between farm workers and growers, how its revolutionary ideology fit uneasily with its drive to organize unions, and the response of the local business community. The second part of this paper examines the trial itself, particularly the rhetoric and strategies each side pursued as both the prosecution and defense sought to frame the trial as a decision on communism. The third analyzes how both the CP's sympathizers and its enemies understood the trial in its aftermath, comparing their rhetoric to their actions.

The Conspiracy Trial is not well known today, and only a few historians have studied it in depth. Kathryn Olmsted is the author of the only published work specifically about the trial. Her paper "Quelling Dissent: The Sacramento Conspiracy Trial and the Birth of the New Right," interprets the prosecution of the CP union leaders as having laid the groundwork for the post-war right in California.¹ Responding to Depression-era fears that violent anti-labor action presaged outright fascism in the United States, Olmsted argues that the anticommunist leaders in the Central Valley "were not the California equivalents of Hitler's brown shirts; rather, they were [the predecessors of] the New Right."² They learned to be effective by "bash[ing] the center for coddling the left."³ But fears of fascism were far from unreasonable. Far from limiting themselves to mere words, conservatives and their allies in government and business engaged in concerted action, both legal and illegal, to suppress unions. In the context of the mid-1930s, this specter of fascism contributed to the impression that the far left was also on the rise.

Kevin Starr's *Endangered Dreams: The Great Depression in California* and Cletus E. Daniel's *Bitter Harvest: A History of California Farmworkers, 1870-1941* have laid the groundwork for this paper. Starr, while he treats the trial itself cursorily, positions it as a prime example of what he calls the "shadowboxing" between the radical left

and hard right in California during the worst years of the Great Depression. Communists, in his view, were “day-dreaming of a Marxist-Leninist utopia” on behalf of workers who were eager for help in their day-to-day struggles but uninterested in socialism, while conservatives exploited “the language and psychosis of a Red Scare to protect their hegemony and investments.”⁴ Daniel’s study provides background to the Conspiracy Trial that has been invaluable for the present study. He draws on congressional investigations into industrial espionage to illuminate facts that otherwise would have remained hidden about the close cooperation between private business and local government to bring the communists to trial. Daniel argues that the Associated Farmers (AF), an organization composed of big growers and businesses from northern California, played a major role in building the case against the communist leaders and that “the cases might never have come to trial without the organization’s assistance.”⁵ Daniel, however, agrees with many historical actors that “it was the Communist Party, rather than the individual defendants, that was actually on trial,” a conclusion this paper problematizes.⁶

There are four kinds of sources this paper utilizes to reconstruct the events surrounding the Conspiracy Trial. The first is newspapers and other periodicals. The trial received significant press coverage not only locally but around California and even around the country. While the *Sacramento Bee* and *Sacramento Union* give an indication of local public opinion about the trial, particularly that of the business establishment, publications like the *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Times*, and *Nation* magazine indicate how the trial was perceived by liberals and conservatives in other parts of the country, and what lessons they drew from it. The CP and the Workers Party, the other radical organization involved, used their own newspapers to push their narratives about the trial. Both the mainstream and the radical press, however, were grossly biased, omitting and distorting facts to fit the viewpoint they were pushing. After the trial’s verdict, sympathetic organizations organized a campaign to raise public awareness and funds in support of an appeal. To this end, the International Labor Defense (ILD) and the National Sacramento Appeal Committee published pamphlets outlining the events of the trial. These pamphlets comprise the second category of sources and are invaluable for the factual information they provide, but they need to be taken with a grain of salt; both the ILD and Appeal Committee were affiliated with the CP and Workers Party, respectively, and were far from impartial in their accounts. The third category of source is records from the trial and appeals courts. In the case of the trial court, unfortunately, the record is sprawling and chaotic, and the stenographic record is no longer extant except for a few small sections. All the same, the trial record provides a helpful way to check the claims of biased narratives. The appellate decision, on the other hand, is an example of clear reasoning that ultimately set the record straight on the trial. Finally, several members of the communist union gave interviews to historians decades after the trial. These oral histories provide one of the only ways to effectively cut through the rhetoric and ideology that obscures many events for the historian, even if the passage of time may introduce its own distortions into interviewees’ memories. By triangulating between newspapers, post-trial pamphlets, court records, oral histories, and the work of historians, this paper attempts a balanced account of events.

The early 1930s, when communists began organizing cannery and field workers in the Central Valley, was among the most tumultuous years in US labor history. The Great Depression had upset the political landscape all over the world, bringing fascism to power in Europe and strengthening the appeal of communism for many suffering through the economic downturn. Both ideologies had their sympathizers within the United States. The Soviet Union hoped to build influence and support through close collaboration with the CP. The communists saw the Depression as an opportunity to gain control of erupting labor struggles to direct them toward political change.⁷ To this end, the party abandoned its previous strategy of trying to infiltrate existing trade unions, and instead organized its own “industrial” unions, aiming in particular to build a following among the least-privileged sections of the working class.⁸

The Central Valley in the first half of the 1930s was fertile ground for radicalism and labor conflict. Workers in the agricultural industry, composed mostly of foreign-born Mexicans and Filipinos but with a growing segment of native-born white Midwesterners, were totally unorganized. The mainstream labor movement was uninterested in wasting its efforts on a low-wage, migrant, and primarily immigrant labor force. Some ethnic Mexican mutual aid societies had tried to extend their efforts to collective bargaining in the 1920s, but these attempts fell apart in the face of economic crisis and repression.⁹ As the Great Depression deepened, wages plummeted to a level that workers could hardly survive on.¹⁰ Living conditions were dire, with workers living in tents and shacks that lacked

sanitation.¹¹ Meanwhile, ownership and control were highly concentrated, with a small minority employing most workers on “industrial plantations.”¹² A racial hierarchy further heightened tensions. In the words of Starr, “white people owned the land, and people of color—368,000 Mexicans most notably—did the work.”¹³ The CP stepped into this situation with explicitly revolutionary intentions.¹⁴ The party was seeking to organize farmworkers under its banner because they were “so oppressed and so inarticulate yet so necessary [...] to the proletarian revolution” as a link between workers and small farmers.¹⁵ With this consideration in mind, the CP founded the Cannery and Agricultural Workers Industrial Union (CAWIU) in 1931.¹⁶

The individuals who would be put on trial in Sacramento exemplify the two kinds of people the CP based itself on as it attempted to organize farmworkers. Pat Chambers was an organizer whose work with labor unions predated the arrival of the communists and had little to do with communist ideology. Around 1930, Chambers became aware of the dire conditions among agricultural workers. “I’ve seen babies starving,” he later recalled. “I’ve seen babies die of starvation, and all you could do was dig a grave.” It was clear to him that something must be done to address such suffering, but “just who it was, we did not know.” Chambers was attracted to the quasi-anarchist ideas of the by-then defunct International Workers of the World (IWW), and conversations with former “wobblies” convinced him to get involved in union organization before the CP came on the scene. Chambers always placed great emphasis on “the immense potential that exists” among simple and uneducated people and tended to downplay the importance of outside agitators such as himself. Even once the CP took the lead in organizing field workers, and he joined them out of pragmatism, he showed scant interest in Marxism.¹⁷

On the other hand, Caroline Decker, the official head of the CAWIU, was a genuine Marxist, though ideology was not her only motivation. Born in Georgia, she joined the communists in 1929 at the age of sixteen, radicalized by the stock market crash. She was already a capable organizer, having worked in the South and New York City, by the time CP leadership appointed her secretary of the CAWIU in 1932. Her original purpose in coming to California was to pursue a romantic relationship, not to advance the revolution.¹⁸ Decker was a committed communist who, along with a handful of others, believed that industrial action would lead to fundamental change in society.¹⁹ “The radicals,” she said later, “were the only people doing anything” to help working people.²⁰ And in her view, to focus on fighting for the “immediate needs” of workers opened up revolutionary possibilities by empowering proletarians.²¹

Though it was in theory, a communist union and its leadership had connections to the party, the CAWIU was not revolutionary in its words or actions. According to Decker, the CAWIU pursued “the basic concerns of trade unions,” meaning wages and working conditions. Revolution was not on the agenda; rather, CP organizers like Decker assumed that workers’ experiences would lead them to revolutionary consciousness.²² Chambers recalled that very few of the organizers actually had a clear idea what Marxism was, and no more than three to four CAWIU organizers were truly CP members in the sense that they took orders from the party.²³ Historians have also been unanimous in affirming that the CAWIU functioned like any non-communist union, regardless of its affiliation with the CP, and did not promote communist ideology to its membership. The CAWIU “avoided overtly Communistic rhetoric in favor of a program of decent wages and conditions,” Starr concludes, and its demands, in Daniel’s words, were “indistinguishable” from those of the conservative trade union movement.²⁴

Furthermore, labor militancy and the violence associated with strikes were quite independent of communist involvement with Central Valley farm workers. Major strike activity began even before the CAWIU started to take a leadership role, and the number of agricultural strikes in California during the 1930s, 140 in total, was greater than the high-profile labor actions the CAWIU led.²⁵ At the height of the CAWIU’s influence among farm workers, many labor actions were spontaneous. In Chambers’s words, “They were gonna take place no matter what we did about it.” Even Decker, who never lost her pride in the communists’ accomplishments in the Central Valley, found it “ridiculous” to think that the CAWIU, with its handful of staff and its nonexistent resources, could have truly instigated the strike wave.²⁶ In 1933, the year of its greatest influence, the union led about two-thirds of the strikes.²⁷

With the help of the CAWIU, farm workers won spectacular victories in 1933 and 1934. Farmworkers' wages nearly doubled in a short period of time, with sympathetic journalist Carey McWilliams estimating that across the valley they went from about fifteen cents to about twenty-five cents an hour. The CAWIU-led strikes involved tens of thousands of workers at once and affected around two-thirds of California's crops. Several years after the union's demise, McWilliams wrote that "there is [...] no parallel in the history of the American labor movement for its spectacular record."²⁸

In response to the strike wave, Central California growers and other business interests organized to repress the militant union. In 1934, they founded the AF, whose members cooperated during strikes and "offer[ed] their services to the local sheriff in the event of disorders arising out of picketing and sabotage."²⁹ They mobilized thousands of vigilantes across the valley, hired labor spies, and kept files on "dangerous radicals."³⁰ During the Cotton Strike of 1933 in the San Joaquin Valley, anti-union violence exploded. At the town of Pixley, where Chambers was speaking to a crowd of strikers, vigilantes with guns approached the strikers. After a verbal confrontation, one vigilante shot and killed a worker. His companions began firing into the crowd, killing two more and wounding at least eight. Chambers, testimony later showed, had tried to get strikers inside and defuse the confrontation.³¹ Vigilantes attacked farmworkers across the valley. Liberal observers denounced the alliance between vigilantes, law enforcement, and big business as incipient fascism.³² This was not a hyperbolic response, especially given that prominent individuals associated with the AF were publicly making statements praising Hitler and Mussolini's violent destruction of the left.³³

In the summer of 1934, a waterfront strikes paralyzed San Francisco. The CP supported the strike, though it was not leading it.³⁴ A Red Scare swept the state, and when the situation in San Francisco escalated into a general strike in July, it provided authorities with a pretext to raid CP offices. According to the *Nation*, police arrested about 170 alleged communists across the state.³⁵ Among them were the eighteen CAWIU organizers, arrested at CP headquarters in Sacramento, who would face trial for criminal syndicalism.

While in jail awaiting charges and then trial, divisions emerged among the communists. This was firstly because the Trotskyist Workers Party, a fierce critic of the CP, sent its representative Herbert Solow, who also contributed to the liberal *Nation* magazine, to attempt to peel some defendants away from the communists and use the trial as an opportunity to publicly denounce them. One defendant, Norman Mini, defected to the Workers Party, was bailed out by the Trotskyists, and pursued a separate defense, a move that Chambers, Decker, and others denounced.³⁶ Decker, however, was growing bitter with the CP for not bailing her out after languishing for months in jail.³⁷ Though she later denied it, she and her husband, who had also been arrested and would stand trial, accepted the Workers Party bail.³⁸ From then on, the two Marxist parties directed much of their rhetorical ammunition against each other. At the same time, Chambers, Deckers, and others rejected the defense attorney, Leo Gallagher, who the CP-affiliated ILD supplied for them.³⁹ Gallagher, famous for defending the man the Nazis accused of setting fire to the Reichstag, was charitably called a "zealot for justice"; he had a belligerent and counterproductive style, and at times during the trial would even berate the jury to better make a point.⁴⁰ Several defendants clearly had doubts about his tactics.

The district attorney, Neil McAllister, headed the prosecution. He kept the defendants in jail for months on charges of vagrancy while preparing a more substantial case against them. McAllister lost his position in the election of 1934, but after a panic from the business community, the California Attorney General used extraordinary power to keep him in charge of the prosecution.⁴¹ The taxpayers paid his salary of fifty dollars daily, nearly \$1,200 in today's money. Aiding McAllister was, among others, the captain of the Los Angeles Police Department's "Red Squad," who had made it his "life work" to destroy communism.⁴² Working closely with the AF, who even hired a specialist to draft the indictments for him, McAllister charged the communists under California's Criminal Syndicalism Law.⁴³ The indictment listed six counts, eventually narrowed to two: one for personally engaging in criminal syndicalism, one for "conspiracy to commit," i.e. membership in an organization advocating the crime.⁴⁴

Adopted in 1919 during the post-war Red Scare, the California Criminal Syndicalism Law defined the crime as "unlawful acts of force or violence or [...] terrorism as a means of accomplishing a change in industrial ownership

or control, or affecting any political change.⁴⁵ It was originally directed against the IWW, which, much like the CAWIU, had been organizing rural workers during the post-war labor unrest in the far-western states. Immediately controversial for its heavy restriction of free speech, the law was used during the first Red Scare in several hundred cases, with convictions in about two-thirds of them.⁴⁶ After the early 1920s, prosecutors let the law become defunct, but put it to use again with the onset of the Great Depression and the growth of the CP.⁴⁷

Jury selection occurred in an atmosphere of a near-hysterical Red Scare. In the middle of the proceedings, the wife of a prospective juror claimed that around twenty communists had come to her house and threatened to kill her husband if he served on the jury.⁴⁸ When she, her friends, and neighbors testified in court, the others did not corroborate her story.⁴⁹ The questioning of her husband as a prospective juror revealed that he was a former Ku Klux Klan member.⁵⁰ The prosecution may have also engaged in jury tampering. McAllister's deputy visited at least one prospective juror's home during the selection process and received gifts from him.⁵¹ The Red Scare atmosphere continued during the trial, fed by sensationalist media reporting from both local newspapers. They reported on a Red "invasion" of the city—though the invaders were actually only protesters—in response to which the City Manager armed hundreds of citizens.⁵² The *Union* inflated letters of protest sent to the judge into "death threats."⁵³

The prosecution's strategy was to pursue convictions by establishing the defendants as CP members and equating communist doctrine with terrorism and violence. McAllister read various communist tracts into the record, generally without context and sometimes omitting important passages. Many of these works were obscure, written in the time of Marx or Lenin, and directed toward the conditions prevailing in Czarist Russia or nineteenth-century Europe.⁵⁴ This strategy closely followed the indictment, which relied primarily on communist literature found in the defendants' possession to charge them with intent to overthrow the government.⁵⁵ Decker later claimed that the majority of the documents the prosecution relied on came not from the CP's local headquarters but from "the FBI file." She claimed to have never heard of many of them.⁵⁶ Other defendants, who were less educated in Marxism than she, almost certainly had not. By linking the defendants to these doctrines, the prosecution hoped to establish their guilt by associating them with a conspiracy to overthrow the government and destroy American institutions.

McAllister built his case on the testimony of farmers and infiltrators in the CAWIU who accused the defendants of advocating the violent overthrow of the government and the most lurid forms of terrorism. McAllister spent a great deal of time attempting to connect his case to unfounded rumors of terrorism and violence spawned from the anti-communist hysteria sweeping Sacramento. Many of the witnesses the prosecution introduced at the trial were of dubious credibility. Some were informants employed by the AF or local law enforcement. One of the most colorful was William Malin Hanks, a private investigator paid by McAllister to infiltrate the CAWIU.⁵⁷ After the Grand Jury issued indictments and before the trial began, Hanks had disappeared from Sacramento, later telling the press that communists had kidnapped him.⁵⁸ On the witness stand, he furiously disavowed his previous kidnapping story and testified that every one of the defendants had told him they planned to overthrow the American government "the Bolshevik way."⁵⁹ Other paid informants made even more unlikely claims.⁶⁰ The language these witnesses used was often quoted directly from the Criminal Syndicalism Law.⁶¹ The most shocking prosecution witness was Frank Peterson, a rancher and vigilante who had been one of those shooting into the crowd of workers at Pixley. A friendly jury had acquitted him of homicide after the killings. At the Conspiracy Trial, he accused Chambers of urging strikers to turn the streets "red with blood," thus provoking the massacre, a claim the defense would later emphatically disprove.⁶² When it ran out of ways to link the defendants to violence and insurrection, the prosecution played to white prejudice, highlighting the communist stance on miscegenation and black liberation.⁶³

The CP's defense strategy was two-pronged. First, it aimed to demonstrate that the defendants had not advocated insurrection or violence. Second, it argued that the CP was in principle opposed to any social change that was not democratic. The CP called around fifty witnesses, mostly drawn from the Central Valley's farmworkers and small farmers who had worked with the CAWIU. Their testimony made it clear that Chambers and other organizers had "cautioned against violence" both at Pixley and in general.⁶⁴ The communists also used this opportunity to provide the jury with information about starvation wages and endemic vigilante violence directed at farmworkers

who challenged the power of growers.⁶⁵ The defense called so many witnesses who testified about the violence against workers that the judge limited their testimony as redundant.⁶⁶

The defense's star witness was Sam Darcy, the Ukrainian-born head of the California CP, who told the jury that the CP in fact "prohibits violence and blames provocateurs for saying otherwise."⁶⁷ Darcy insisted the prosecution had misconstrued classic Marxist doctrine, and that "no revolution is either advisable or possible until the vast majority of the people want it."⁶⁸ Except for Decker and possibly Mini, the defendants also disavowed forceful revolution through working-class organizations as a goal.⁶⁹ They insisted over and over again that they wanted only "better living conditions, shorter hours and higher wages for the workers."⁷⁰

Mini, the lone defendant who had been(?) thrown in with the Trotskyists, pursued a separate defense. It is difficult to reach a conclusion about him, given the available material. Whether he was a coward and traitor, as the CP claimed, or a hero, as the Workers Party portrayed him, depends on which sources one believes. Before the trial began, Mini retained his own attorney, a conservative judge famous for attacking the IWW in the post-war era; he also made a long statement to the prosecution to the effect that forceful revolution was integral to communist doctrine.⁷¹ According to the Trotskyist press, he proudly defended the same position on the witness stand, repeatedly turned down offers of immunity, and gave a defiant, eloquent speech to the judge at his sentencing.⁷² But these Trotskyist claims do not match other accounts, including the judge's description of the sentencing. Post-trial, Mini was one of the defendants who most stood out to jurors as likely innocent, strongly suggesting his statements were an attempt to publicly abandon Marxism, not defend it. Trotskyist self-aggrandizement notwithstanding, Mini may have been cooperating with the prosecution the best he could in hopes of leniency—a strategy that would pay off when he was sentenced.⁷³

After sixty-six hours of deliberation and 118 ballots, the jury's verdict acquitted all defendants of personally engaging in criminal syndicalism, but convicted eight—among them Chambers, Decker, and Mini—on the count that equated CP membership with conspiracy to commit criminal syndicalism. Most observers received the verdict uneasily, as it was contradictory in no less than three ways. First, though the CP was a legal party, eight men and women had been convicted for membership in it. Second, the evidence against all the defendants was the same, yet more than half of them went free. Third, if the defendants were not guilty of "personal conduct" that violated the law, there seemed little left to send them to prison for. Immediately after the trial, members of the jury effectively admitted to the press that they had compromised between several jurors' desire to free the prisoners and the intense media pressure calling for a conviction. One jury member signed an affidavit stating that he had been pressured into making an unjust decision. Interviews given to the *Daily Worker* suggested jurors traded an acquittal on the first count for a conviction on the second.⁷⁴

The AF, the prosecution, local political leaders, and the conservative press expressed essentially the same attitude toward the CAWIU and the communist organizers: all argued vociferously that communist-affiliated unions were an existential danger. This conservative reaction against the CP framed the question as one of communism versus "Americanism," a term that, though not defined, stood in vaguely for American social and political institutions that communism threatened. The press took up this argument zealously. The *Los Angeles Times* set the tone for the discussion on Americanism. The *Times* opined that the "legal niceties" shown to the "Reds" only allowed them to continue to "jeopardize life and property," and that to secure the "peace and comfort of the honest American workers" it was necessary to deport or imprison the communists who had been instrumental in helping them win higher wages.⁷⁵ While at first lukewarm about defending the Criminal Syndicalism Law as an exemplar of American ideals, the *Sacramento Union* was in the end caught up in the imperative to support the attack on radicalism. After the jury's weak verdict, it reversed its earlier position, arguing that "whether the criminal syndicalism law is constitutional or not is a moot question," since the law was merely a democratic response to undemocratic activity. Constitutional protections did not cover "the right to stir up violence, which is just what these communists have been trying to do," its editors declared, apparently unfamiliar with the content of the verdict.⁷⁶ The *Sacramento Bee* made little effort to be impartial. It filled its pages with guileless repetitions of the prosecution and the Red Squad's talking points, informing its readers that "labor strikes... are rehearsals of the American revolution being plotted by the Soviet government."⁷⁷

So-called Americanism, as it appeared in conservative discourse, mostly stood in for the economic interests of the AF. McAllister made this clear when, in his closing remarks to the jury, he saluted the flag with hand on heart and acclaimed the AF as paragons of Americanism in very the same breath.⁷⁸ Indeed, the AF represented itself as committed to “combat[ing] communism,” but its conduct was consistent with an anti-union crusade as much as an anti-communist one.⁷⁹ Later congressional investigation showed that the AF’s financial sponsors, namely “railroads, utilities, banks, oil companies, and other industrial interests,” provided support because they “were convinced that the defeat of farm unionism would in time retard the urban labor movement.”⁸⁰ The *Los Angeles Times* made clear what Americanism meant for the AF and its allies just after the verdict. “If the leading spirits in the disorders which have been inflicted on the sections of the State during the past two years,” its editors wrote, “are retired from circulation for a [growing] season, the Sacramento case will not have been in vain.”⁸¹ This was an admission in plain language that the motivation for the trial was to suppress the farmworkers’ union, not to defend American democracy.

Because the “strikes [were] a threat to their cheap and docile labor force,” one historian has noted, the farmers saw militant unionism as a prelude to revolution, or at least were motivated to treat it as such.⁸² The AF and its spokesmen called the communists un-American only in reference to the familiar America of their own socio-economic domination in the Central Valley. Despite being a conventional labor union, having nothing to do with the communist revolution in practice, the CAWIU’s CP associations presented to the AF a golden opportunity to destroy the farmworkers’ union while masquerading as champions of American values.

The CP used the Conspiracy Trial primarily as an opportunity to aggrandize itself and promote its immediate goals, regardless of the cost to its members who stood trial. For example, the party’s newspapers constantly implored their readers to send letters of protest to the judge and McAllister, even though that clearly was unlikely to have a positive impact on the case, and arguably only inflamed public opinion even more against them.⁸³ One of the CP’s papers, the *Young Worker*, disowned the defendants entirely, describing them as nothing more than “workers who have been prominent in the labor movement.”⁸⁴ Even as its members were led off to prison, the CP celebrated, observing happily that “relief came from the working class all over the country as a result of class solidarity organized by the Communist Party.”⁸⁵ As the trial was ongoing, the party cooperated with Democrats and mainstream labor organizations in support of a California Assembly bill to repeal the Criminal Syndicalism Law, which never made it out of committee but ended up drawing significant crowds to CP events.⁸⁶

Perhaps surprisingly, the CP did not view the conviction as a defeat. This was in part because the communists had believed the Conspiracy Trial was “a test case at illegalizing the Communist Party,” from which it had escaped with only the loss of a few members.⁸⁷ Another reason the CP was not concerned about the verdict was that it had already disbanded the CAWIU in the midst of the trial. The communists dissolved the union not because of repression, but because they had received orders from Moscow to adapt to the Communist International’s “Popular Front” strategy, which required working alongside more conservative organizations to counter the rise of fascism.⁸⁸ Thus, the CAWIU leaders were quite useful to the party as “political prisoners in jail,” in other words, as objects for further publicity and fundraising during the appeal process.⁸⁹ But as political actors, they quickly found themselves ostracized from the party.⁹⁰

That the CP saw the role of communism in the Conspiracy Trial as synonymous with its own organizational success is evident in its approach to the Trotskyists. Indeed, the CP probably directed more abusive vitriol against its rivals on the radical left than it did against the perpetrators of the Red Scare in Sacramento. The communists denounced Trotskyists as the “vanguard of Counter-Revolution,” an ally of “rotten liberalism” and reformism. Above all, the CP spilled much ink attacking Mini, claiming not only that he was a coward, but that was trying to free himself at the expense of the other defendants.⁹¹ Mini, in their portrayal, encapsulated the treachery of the Trotskyists in general. Critically, the CP not only attacked Mini’s character but asserted repeatedly that he was an imbecile who misunderstood the correct Marxist attitude toward revolution.⁹²

The Trotskyists pinned culpability for the entire debacle on the CP. Blame for the verdict fell not only on the growers and the authorities, they wrote, but also on the “accomplices... the cynical and corrupt leaders of the Com-

munist Party who shamefully subordinated the interests of the defendants” to the factional struggle against the Workers Party.⁹³ The CP’s goal, they claimed, was essentially to deny Marxism’s revolutionary character for its own momentary gain. They chastised the CP for labeling Mini’s statement, namely that there would be a working-class revolution and that it would likely be forceful, as a “confession” and Mini as a “stool pigeon.” In fact, much of the Workers Party’s coverage of the trial was taken up by outlandish claims about Mini’s inspiring stand on principles, to the point that real events got lost in their fictions.⁹⁴

The Trotskyist dogmatism, however, was coupled with a policy that was just as pragmatic as the CP’s. During the mid-1930s, the Trotskyists took every opportunity to outmaneuver the CP for control of labor struggles. Direct competition between Trotskyist and communist groups for leadership in Central Valley agricultural labor actions had begun during the 1934 apricot strike, though at the time it required Trotskyists to cooperate with the American Federation of Labor (AFL), a mainstream organization.⁹⁵ During the trial and appeal, the Trotskyists did their best to isolate the CP from sympathetic organizations and position their own legal defense group as the one that would “lead non-communist organizations” to “save the Sacramento defendants.”⁹⁶ Workers Party leaders undoubtedly had such considerations in mind when they maintained that “it is the most elementary working class right which is at stake in this trial: the right to organize into trade unions,” adding with flair that “we entered the case [...] for the sake of the working class—the real defendant at Sacramento.”⁹⁷

The CP did find some support in its fight against the AF from liberals in California and other parts of the country. Among the most notable of these was McWilliams, who followed the agricultural labor movement closely. McWilliams interpreted the trial as a catastrophe for California’s politics, believing the verdict had inaugurated a “period [...] of transition from the sporadic vigilante activity to controlled fascism, from the clumsy violence of the drunken farmers to the calculated maneuvers of an economic-militaristic machine.”⁹⁸ The dystopian picture he paints reveals a strong fear that if the CP were destroyed, a necessary counterbalance to the far right would be lost. “Organized terrorism in agriculture [will] produce a system of peonage,” he predicted.⁹⁹ Uneasy about the fate of the CP in the aftermath of its defeat, the *Nation* opined that “American Communism needs to liquidate the literary hangovers of its underground period,” because the experience of the Conspiracy Trial was showing that its radical rhetoric was damaging its reputation and influence.¹⁰⁰ The *New York Times* similarly took note of the trial from the other side of the country and sympathized with the victims of the prosecution. The paper was concerned that negative public opinion generated by radical CP rhetoric would hamper the ability of California liberals to work with the communists to keep the far right at bay. For these commentators, it was the “Fascist Peril” and not the “Red Menace” which was the greatest threat to American institutions.¹⁰¹

Those sent to prison for their role in the CAWIU came to radically different conclusions than the CP, its allies, and its detractors about the meaning of the trial. While Chambers had worked with the communist-affiliated union out of necessity and leaned ideologically toward the libertarian left, Decker began to move away from the CP only in prison. “I had a lot of time to do a lot of thinking” in the Tehachapi correctional facility, she later recalled, and grew dissatisfied with a party that used people as means to its own ends.¹⁰² She came to believe, in contrast to the party’s program, that “workers will learn from experience [...] if they ever have radical social changes it will come as a result of the experiences that they have had, not because somebody is going to superimpose it from the top,” and that they can only bring about better living conditions and even socialist salvation by their own efforts.¹⁰³ Decker never believed that communism was on trial in Sacramento. “We are not being convicted as criminals,” she told the court at her sentencing. “We are convicted for union organization. The verdict is a conviction of thousands of workers, farmers and students with whom we have been associated.”¹⁰⁴

Mini’s attitude is harder to judge, since both the CP and Workers Party were eager to use his words for their own ends. His actions suggest a rather haphazard approach to the trial—first hiring his own counsel, then throwing in with the Trotskyists, and making statements to the prosecution that could be construed as either traitorous or defiant. That Mini ultimately received the shortest prison sentence, with a recommendation for probation from the jury, suggests that he was trying to be cooperative with the prosecution. On the other hand, Decker did not seem to have this impression.¹⁰⁵ One imagines that Mini was caught between staying true to his communist ideals and trying to keep his freedom. Information is limited for the other defendants, but to some degree they were all likely in a

similar position. Though the judge wrote for each one at their sentencing that he or she “considers himself a martyr in the cause of communism,” the reality was more complex. In their conversations with the judge, they did not cite communist doctrine but protested the absurdity and unfairness of their conviction. “We are a thorn in the sides of the capitalists,” one told the judge. “Capitalists wish to brush us aside; therefore, we are sent to San Quentin.”¹⁰⁶

Surprisingly, the defendants were not very apt to regard their conviction as a defeat for the working class. While Chambers was bitter about the immediate effects of removing organizers from the fields, he regarded his time as well-spent and the experience as having laid the ground for further positive developments.¹⁰⁷ For Decker the trial represented the growers’ retreat from the increasingly ineffective tactics of violence and vigilantism. In the trial, the AF had been forced into legal avenues of attacking the union. She looked back on her conviction not as a setback, but ultimately a great victory for workers no longer terrorized by hired guns.¹⁰⁸

Ultimately, farm workers made clear through their actions that, at least for them, the CAWIU had never been about communism. Even before Decker, Chambers, and the others were arrested, the union was faltering because migratory workers would move on as soon as the harvest was over. They seemed to have little allegiance to the CAWIU once it had passed the peak of its success and made no attempt to revive the union when the leadership disappeared into jail.¹⁰⁹ Under the Popular Front strategy, the CP supported the AFL’s stated purpose of unionizing farm workers, but little came of it. “Only fanatics,” said the Secretary of the California Federation of Labor in 1935, “are willing to live in shacks or tents and get their heads broken in the interest of migratory laborers.”¹¹⁰ Dustbowl migration replaced the Mexican agricultural workforce with midwestern whites, and neither group was interested in revolution.

The story of the trial did not end with the guilty verdict. The prisoners appealed their conviction, and the appellate court ruled on the case in 1937. The justices spent the majority of their decision defending the Criminal Syndicalism Law and the defendants’ convictions. Referencing the communist literature presented at the trial, the justices affirmed both that “the evidence tends to show that the appellants actually organized associations for the purpose of syndicalism” and that “to advocate the cause of communism [...] was clearly in contravention” of the law.¹¹¹ The decision even opined that the alleged collusion between businesses and prosecutors to railroad the communists to jail was “erroneous and fanciful,” though congressional inquiries would prove otherwise in a matter of years.¹¹² But the justices could not abide the contradictory verdict. They pointed out that “since the appellants were deliberately acquitted” of personal conduct consistent with the crime, it is impossible that they committed the same crime in and through the CP.¹¹³ The applicants had already been “effectually acquitted” of all charges when the jury rendered its verdict.¹¹⁴ After years in prison, the CAWIU’s leaders went free.

Despite its strong bias, the appellate decision points to a central tension in the role of communism in the Conspiracy Trial. The justices were not wrong to see an appeal to “force and violence” in the Marxist literature presented by the prosecution. Whether or not leaders like Sam Darcy and all or most of the defendants were sincere in their disavowal of forceful revolution in twentieth-century America, Criminal Syndicalism Law clearly made advocating such a program illegal. The men and women of the CAWIU who lent their support to farmworker strikes, however, generally did not act consistently with the theory of the CP. They did not promote Marxism to workers and stuck to bread-and-butter demands. The jury quite realistically absolved them of revolutionary activity while their association with the CP implicated them under the law, resulting in an apparent paradox.

Was communism on trial, then, alongside Chambers, Decker, Mini, and their comrades? From the CP’s initial decision to organize farm workers, to the justifications for the prosecution, to the debates about the meaning of the case after it was decided, communism was absolutely central on a rhetorical level, but most historical actors based their actions on non-ideological considerations. For the AF, the business community, local conservatives, and the media, the association of the CAWIU with the CP was a perfect excuse to eliminate it. Paid informants, the prosecutors, and newspapers covering the trial focused as much as they could on the communists’ theoretical commitment to revolution, while ignoring or obscuring how little their day-to-day actions had to do with violent social change. Beyond the rhetorical counter position of “Americanism” to communism, however, the AF was engaged in determined and old-fashioned union-busting. The defendants, conversely, found in communism a lan-

guage to express their commitment to the working class, even though most besides Decker were not very interested in Marxist dogma, and Decker herself was not perfectly doctrinaire. Mini, second only to Lenin in revolutionary zeal if the Trotskyists are to be believed, was probably most concerned with lightening his own punishment. Even the CP and Workers Party, despite incessant references to communist ideals in their coverage of the trial, showed by their actions that they were above all concerned with improving their image and gaining ground in the labor movement at the other's expense.

Ironically, fascism may have been more real than communism in the Central Valley of the early- to mid-1930s. The tight coordination between local authorities, vigilantes—many of whom were military veterans organized under the American Legion—and business interests much more closely resembled the rising European hard right than the CAWIU resembled the Bolsheviks. When liberals protested that attacks on labor “reproduce what has been happening in Hitler’s Germany,” they were only wrong in that the fascists’ traditional enemy was a mirage.¹¹⁵

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ENDNOTES

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- 9 Mark Reisler, "Mexican Unionization in California Agriculture, 1927-1936," *Labor History* 14, no. 4 (January 1973): 565.
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- 15 Reisler, "Mexican Unionization," 569.
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- 17 "Interviews on the Organization of the Cannery and Agricultural Workers' Industrial Union in California in the 1930s," Interviews by George Ewart, 1972. Online Archive of California. Accessed September 20, 2025, https://archive.org/details/cubanc_000283/cubanc_000283_t03_a_access.mp3. Chambers was the inspiration for the protagonist of John Steinbeck's novel *In Dubious Battle*, though the real man was not much like the doctrinaire revolutionary of the book. See Olmsted, "Quelling Dissent," 60; Jackson J. Benson and Anne Loftis, "John Steinbeck and Farm Labor Organization: The Background of *In Dubious Battle*," *American Literature* 52, no. 2 (May 1980): 194-223.
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- 26 "Caroline Decker oral history."
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- 28 McWilliams, *Factories in the Field*, 228-229.
- 29 McWilliams, *Factories in the Field*, 231.
- 30 McWilliams, *Factories in the Field*, 233-34.
- 31 Starr, *Endangered Dreams*, 77-78; Herbert Solow, *Union-Smashing in Sacramento: The Truth About the Criminal Syndicalism Trial* (National Sacramento Appeal Committee, 1935), 18.
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- 34 See Starr, *Endangered Dreams*, 90-111.

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- 37 Solow, *Union-Smashing*, 4.
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- 44 Center for Sacramento History, *The People of the State of California vs. Pat Chambers et al.*, Sacramento Superior Court trial record, 1935.
- 45 Woodrow Whitten, *Criminal Syndicalism and the Law in California: 1919-1927* (American Philosophical Society, 1969), 65.
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- 48 *Sacramento Bee*, December 14, 1934.
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- 52 *Sacramento Union*, January 17, 1935, and January 18, 1935; Quin, *C.S. Case Against Labor*, 20; *Western Worker*, January 24, 1935.
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- 56 "Interviews on the CAWIU."
- 57 Quin, *C.S. Case Against Labor*, 6.
- 58 *Sacramento Bee*, December 14, 1934.
- 59 Quin, *C.S. Case Against Labor*, 21.
- 60 For example, Melville Harris claimed that Norman Mini was training Civilian Conservation Corps members to fight in a coming revolution. See *Western Worker*, February 11, 1935, and *Sacramento Union*, February 6, 1935.
- 61 See Quin, *C.S. Case Against Labor*, 21, and Center for Sacramento History, *People v. Chambers*, trial record.
- 62 Quin, *C.S. Case Against Labor*, 22; *Sacramento Union*, February 9, 1935.
- 63 *Sacramento Bee*, January 19, 1935; *Western Worker*, January 24, 1935.
- 64 *Western Worker*, February 14, 1935 and February 28, 1935; *Sacramento Bee*, February 19, 1935; *Sacramento Union*, February 26, 1935.
- 65 See *Western Worker*, March 7 and 14, 1935.
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- 67 Quin, *C.S. Case Against Labor*, 23.
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- 74 *Daily Worker*, April 3, 1935, and April 4, 1935; *Sacramento Bee*, April 4, 1935.
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- 86 For example, thousands attended a CP-associated rally in San Francisco to express support for the bill. *Western Worker*, March 18, 1935.
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- 88 Daniel, *Bitter Harvest*, 254.
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- 90 Decker described herself as immediately becoming "persona non-grata" among communists when she left prison. "Interviews on the CAWIU."
- 91 *Young Worker*, March 5, 1935.
- 92 For CP attacks on Mini, see *Daily Worker*, February 9, 1935, and February 21, 1935; *Western Worker*, February 7, 1935, and February 11, 1935, among others.
- 93 *New Militant*, April 6, 1935.
- 94 On March 2, 1935, for example, the *New Militant* spent several paragraphs painting a picture of defendants and local workers alike shaking Mini's hand and seeking advice from him while a *Western Worker* salesman looked on ruefully.
- 95 Starr, *Endangered Dreams*, 81; "Interviews on the CAWIU."
- 96 *New Militant*, February 9, 1935.
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- 100 Clement, "Red-Baiters' Holiday," *Nation*, March 13, 1935.
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- 109 Reisler, "Mexican Unionization," 578.
- 110 Reisler, "Mexican Unionization," 568-69.
- 111 *People v. Chambers et al.* 22 Cal. App. 2d, 687, 703, 708 (1937).
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ANANSI PRIZE

THE ANANSI PRIZE



In West Africa and in communities throughout the Atlantic world, Anansi is celebrated as the Giver of the story and of the arts of history and storytelling. He is also the personification of wisdom, knowledge, and duplicity. In the African Diaspora, the Spider God of Ghanaian origins outsmarts his more powerful adversaries, using creativity and guile. In Europe, Africa, and in the Americas, Anansi has come to embody resistance, agency, and the indomitable spirit of people of African descent.

Taking inspiration from this history, the Anansi Prize is an international writing contest. A collaboration between California State University, Sacramento, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the Freedom Seekers Project, and the Shattuck Endowment, it examines the intersection of history, memory, biography, and authorship.

The goal of the Prize is to support original research and writing, with a preference toward graduate students. Each author will draw on a newspaper advertisement for a fugitive from slavery to write a short history (approximately 1,000 words) about the subject of the public notice, using the information contained in the advertisement and additional research. All submissions for the Anansi Prize must adhere to the requirements for stories submitted for publication on this website. For more details visit our submission page.

A committee of historians will peer-review submissions. Their decision in all cases will be final.

The Anansi Prize will award three winners \$1,000 dollars each. The winning stories will be published in the June issue in the *Clio* journal at California State University, Sacramento.

Stories are now being accepted for consideration. All submissions for the 2026 prize must be submitted no later than Thursday December 31, 2026. The Freedom Seekers Project Team expects to announce the winners in the Spring of 2027.

2026 SHATTUCK COLONIAL AMERICAN HISTORY SYMPOSIUM

FACES IN THE CROWD: BLACK LIBERATION BEFORE & AFTER THE REVOLUTION

At the 2026 Shattuck Colonial American History Symposium, three winners of the Anansi Prize joined us to share their research. The Anansi Prize is an international writing competition that invites scholars to explore newspaper advertisements for fugitives from slavery and build original histories grounded in both the ads and additional research. During this session, doctoral candidates Nicole Brown of William & Mary, Tamia Haygood of William & Mary, and John Balz of the University of Wisconsin–Madison reflected on the people at the center of their projects and the challenges they faced in the process.

Nicole Brown discussed her work on Nanny, an enslaved woman in eighteenth-century Williamsburg, and Jack, Nanny's son, a student connected to the Williamsburg Bray School. Brown described her larger research as an effort to "recenter Black women in particular and Black children as actors and agents in their own stories, rather than as afterthoughts in somebody else's story." Her project traces how scattered records, including runaway advertisements and baptismal records, can be read together to reveal a more complex story of self-liberation in colonial Virginia.

Tamia Haygood presented research on Phillis, an enslaved woman whose self-emancipation illuminates the entangled histories of slavery and servitude in Pennsylvania. Haygood explained that Phillis's story is unusual because the advertisement identified her as "salt water," a term that at the time meant she was "unseasoned" and had recently arrived in the colonies. Despite this, the advertisement also noted that Phillis spoke English well. This detail interested Haygood because runaway slave advertisements rarely allude to enslaved people's previous experiences in their homelands. Haygood's work shows how women used mobility and material resources to pursue freedom relentlessly.

John Balz spoke about Norton Minors. Balz explained that he was initially drawn to the case because Minors' enslaver spent a very large sum of money trying to recapture him. From there, Balz raised compelling questions about how enslaved people obtained their freedom and what networks existed to help them. Through baptismal, church, probate, court, and military records, Balz reconstructed a life that revealed both the reach of the archive and its limits, particularly when trying to understand the networks that made self-liberation possible.

All three scholars emphasized that their work was about recovering historical subjects with great care and respect. As Brown observed, the challenge is to restore humanity to people with whom the archive recorded as property. Together, the panel showed how the Anansi Prize creates a space for emerging scholars to tell deeply researched, ethically grounded stories. Nicole Brown and Tamia Haygood have their prize-winning papers in this year's edition of *Clio*; John Balz's research can be found in last year's edition. To listen to the rest of this interview, please refer to Sacramento State's history webpage under The Shattuck Endowment section or scan the QR code below.



Figure 1. Faces in the Crowd: Black Liberation Before & After the Revolution Podcast Interview with Nicole Brown, Tamia Haygood, and John Balz. Podcast produced by Mikayla J. Gonzales.

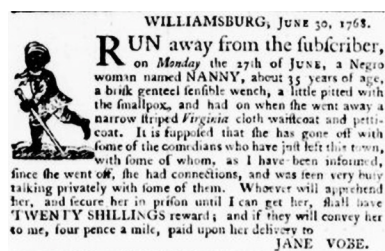


Figure 1. Advertisement for the capture of the runaway slave Nanny. Source: *The Virginia Gazette* (Williamsburg), June 30, 1768.

THE STORY OF NANNY (JUNE 1768) NICOLE BROWN

Transcription: RUN away from the subscriber, on *Monday* the 27th of JUNE, a Negro woman named NANNY, about 35 years of age, a brisk genteel sensible wench, a little pitted with the smallpox, and had on when she went away a narrow-striped *Virginia* cloth waistcoat and petticoat. It is supposed that she has gone off with some of the comedians who have just left town, with some of whom, as I have been informed, since she went off, she had connections, and was seen very busy talking privately with some of them. Whoever will apprehend her, and secure her in prison until I can get her, shall have TWENTY SHILLINGS reward; and if they will convey her to me, four pence a mile, paid upon delivery to

JANE VOBE.

The Virginia Gazette (Williamsburg), June 30, 1768.

Nanny had an impossible choice to make on Jun 17, 1768. Her decision to self-liberate was not made lightly, or without cost. As enslaved woman prepared to flee the city of Williamsburg with the Virginia Company of Comedians, we can only imagine what ran through Nanny's mind. Would she be recaptured? Would she be punished by her enslaver Jane Vobe? What would happen to those that she left behind? While such thoughts are lost to history, the impact of Nanny's flight is not.

That spring, the Virginia Company of Comedians performed in Williamsburg between March 31 and May 26. The Company staged a variety of plays including the tragedy *Douglas*, John Gay's *The Beggars Opera*, and three farces entitled *The Honest Yorkshireman*, *The Anatomist, or Sham Doctor*, and *The Miller of Mansfield*.¹ Many of these plays centered on themes of social justice and human worth. That might explain why Nanny joined the company; she might have believed that this troupe would support her absconding from Virginia's capital city.

Prior to her departure, Nanny already expressed a penchant for the written word. On March 19, 1764, other sources indicate, "Mrs. Vobe's Nan" obtained a copy of Charles Allen's *The Polite Lady: or, A Course on Female Education* for six shillings.² Written as an epistolary advice book, the book encouraged its readers to "form the character of a young lady." Such genteel development included the study of reading, writing, cyphering, dancing, drawing, music, the French language, geography, and sewing, among other categories. Apparently, Nanny was interested in improving herself perhaps as part of larger goal to self-liberation. Her mistress concurred. In the advertisement she

¹ *The Virginia Gazette* (Williamsburg), May 26, 1768, page 2.; *The Virginia Gazette* (Williamsburg), May 12, 1768, page 2.; *The Virginia Gazette* (Williamsburg), March 31, 1768, page 2.

² "Virginia Gazette daybook, 1764-1766," *University of Virginia Library Online Exhibits*, accessed September 30, 2025, <https://explore.lib.virginia.edu/items/show/5031>. The entry related to Nanny appears on page 58.

paid to print in the *Virginia Gazette*, the owner of the King's Arm tavern described the escapee as both "genteel" and "sensible."³

When Nanny fled, the enslaved woman with the countenance of a freed woman left prepared. She took a "narrow striped" matching waistcoat and petticoat of Virginia cloth. This fabric she carried away with her was a staple of the textiles which clothed the bodies of enslaved men, women, and children in colonial Virginia. A simple, locally made, coarse fabric, it is "described as cotton warp filled in with wool or a mixture of wool and cotton in the weft."⁴ It would have been sensible to wear in May of that year, as the weather was consistently "clear & warm" towards the end of the month. The selection of a waistcoat and petticoat may also have come out of necessity, due to the comfort and ease of mobility that this ensemble provided in flight.⁵

We do not know what ultimately happened to Nanny after 1768. However, we do know that this escape came at an unmeasurable personal loss of being separated from her child. By February 16, 1769, Nanny's son Jack was attending the Williamsburg Bray School alongside 29 other students.⁶ The school was a pro-slavery institution meant to instruct Black children to be "reconciled to their state of servitude."⁷ It is interesting that less than one year after his mother's departure, Vobe felt it necessary to enroll Nanny's son in a school whose primary intention was racialized subjugation. As for his mother, who had likely learned to read before she escaped, the school's mission would have likely produced the opposite effect.

As her flight to freedom suggest, on June 17, 1768, Nanny chose to do something rather extraordinary. She put herself above all others. In an era when Black women statistically self-liberated less than men in Virginia, often opting for long stints of truancy to survive the horrors of slavery, Nanny defied the statistics gathered by historians who study this time period. She left her son behind. Her self-liberation was a deeply personal one that broke the tradition of history itself.⁸

³ Charles Allen and Portia, *The Polite Lady; or, A Course of Female Education: In a Series of Letters, from a Mother to Her Daughter...* (Philadelphia: Printed for Mathew Carey, 1798). This version is a reprinting of the 1760 English edition.

⁴ Linda Baumgarten. "Clothes for the People, Slave Clothing in Early Virginia." Research Report. Collections Division. Williamsburg, VA: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1988. <https://research.colonialwilliamsburg.org/DigitalLibrary/view/index.cfm?doc=ResearchReports%5CRR0409.xml> [accessed April 21, 2026].

⁵ "Remarks—of the—Weather [May 1768]," *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/01-02-02-0003-0014>. George Washington recorded the weather for the entire month of May in 1768 during his trip to Williamsburg.

⁶ "[Enclosure: List of Negro Children], 16 February 1769," in *Religious Philanthropy and Colonial Slavery: The American Correspondence of the Associates of Dr. Bray, 1717-1777* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 277–78; John Son of Nanny a Slave belonging to Jane Vobe was baptized. September. the 4th 1763' was listed in the Bruton Parish Baptismal Register. This is certainly Jack, a student at the Williamsburg Bray School in 1769. See "Bruton & Middle Parish Record 1662-1797", <https://heritagecenter.bru-tonparish.org/book/bruton-middleton-parish-register-1662-1797/bruton-middleton-parish-register-1662-1797-page-76>. [accessed April 21, 2026].

⁷ "[Rev. John Waring] A Letter to an American Planter from His Friend in London, 10 October 1770." In *Religious Philanthropy and Colonial Slavery: The American Correspondence of the Associates of Dr. Bray, 1717-1777*, 293–302. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985. For more information on the Williamsburg Bray School and Jane Vobe's affiliation with it, please also see Nicole Brown. "Preliminary Williamsburg Bray School Historical Research Report, Block 14 Building 41." Research Report. Williamsburg, VA: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 2024, 37.

⁸ Antonio T. Bly, "'Pretends He Can Read': Runaways and Literacy in Colonial America, 1730—1776," *Early American Studies* 6, no. 2 (2008): 261–94; Stephanie M. H. Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South, First Edition* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004) 35–60.

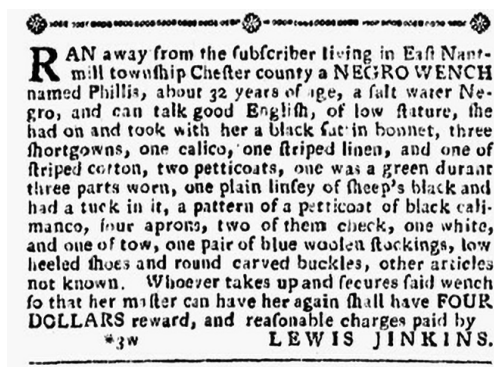


Figure 1. Advertisement for the capture of the runaway slave Phillis. Source: *Freedman's Journal; or, the North-American Intelligencer* (Philadelphia), December 1, 1784

THE STORY OF PHILLIS (DECEMBER 1784) TAMIA HAYGOOD

Transcription: Ran away from the subscriber living in East Nantmill township Chester county a NEGRO WENCH named Phillis, about 32 years of age, a salt water Negro, and can talk good English, of a low stature, she had on and took with her a black satten bonnet, three shortgowns, one calico, one striped linen, and one of striped cotton, two petticoats, one was green durant three parts worn, one plain linsey of sheep's black and had a tuck in it, a pattern of a petticoat of black calamanco, four aprons, two of them check, one white, and one of tow, one pair of blue woolen stockings, low heeled shoes and round carved buckles, other articles unknown. Whoever takes up and secures said wench so that her master can have her again shall have FOUR DOLLARS reward, and reasonable charges paid by LEWIS JINKINS.

Freedman's Journal; or, the North-American Intelligencer (Philadelphia), December 1, 1784

In the midst of winter some time prior to December in 1784, an enslaved Black woman named Phillis stood at a proverbial fork in the road: remain the property of Lewis Jenkins, or brave the winter in pursuit of freedom. While most of her contemporaries elected to stay put, near familiar places and faces and the warmth of a hearth, Phillis chose to face the cold alone.¹ Her oppressor explained her intrepidity in an interesting way. Phillis, the East Nantmeal resident explained, was “a salt water Negro.”² A derogatory term most enslavers used to describe unacculturated African captives. Lewis's use of the term suggests that Phillis, at the very least, was not broken by the Middle Passage.³

In her determination to be free, Phillis learned English. Her enslaver already, and perhaps begrudgingly, admitted that she “can talk good English.”⁴ The freedom seeker was an outlier among Africans who learned the language. Between the 1750s and 1780s, self-emancipating Africans more commonly spoke English poorly, indif-

¹ Women accounted for only 12% of the fugitive population in the Delaware Valley. This is compared to 88% of enslaved men who self-liberated. See, Billy G. Smith, “Black Women Who Stole Themselves in Eighteenth-Century America,” in *Inequality in Early America*, eds. Carla G. Pestana and Sharon V. Salinger (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1999), 138.

² “Ran away from the subscriber,” *Freeman's Journal; or, the North-American Intelligencer*, December 1, 1784, [2].

³ Stephanie E. Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 6-7.

⁴ “Ran away from the subscriber,” *Freeman's Journal; or, the North-American Intelligencer*, December 1, 1784, [2].

ferently, or broken.⁵ With her command of her oppressor's tongue, Phillis passed for country born as she traversed Pennsylvania's back roads alone.⁶

Besides her strong command of the English language, Phillis demonstrated a definite awareness of her environment. As Lewis explained, Phillis displayed a certain savvy in the way she planned her escape from slavery. When she fled, she *liberated* not only herself but also fourteen articles of his household property, and "other articles unknown" to Lewis.⁷ Phillis planned well since she secreted away gowns, aprons, and petticoats while her enslaver was otherwise engaged in his trade: throwing clay into pots, plates, and other pieces in his ceramic's studio.⁸ Clearly, her choices underscore her determination to pass as a free woman.

Her choices also demonstrate her understanding of the world in which she lived. Phillis likely financed her journey to freedom with the surplus of clothing. She traded several items she carried away for a hot meal or a temporary place to stay. Perhaps one of these transactions took place at Warwick Furnace, one of the province's most prolific iron works.⁹ The furnace was a relatively short distance from where she fled.¹⁰ If no buyer was to be found there, then she may have had better luck at the neighboring Coventry or Reading forges.¹¹ Like many other freedom seekers, she may also have made her way to Philadelphia and its fast-growing Black population.¹² Actively, she engaged in the clandestine economy subtly referenced in public warnings cautioning the public against harboring or entertaining fugitive laborers that were commonplace in self-emancipation advertisements.

⁵ According to Gary B. Nash, African captives were imported to Pennsylvania in greater numbers between the 1750s through 1780s because Euro-American servant men enlisted in the French and Indian War, and later the American Revolution. Gary B. Nash, *Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia's Black Community, 1720-1840*, Eighth Edition (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 9, 10-11. Only 20% of subscribers provided information about self-enslaved women's linguistic skills. However, the data follows the trajectory of slavery in Pennsylvania from 1720 to 1799. Enslaved women with the strongest English-language skills are concentrated in the 1720s through 1740s, when the majority of enslaved people were transported to Pennsylvania from either the West Indies or South Carolina. During the 1790s, there was an increase of French-speaking enslaved women who arrived in Philadelphia with White refugees of the Haitian Revolution. For information on Haitian-born enslaved women in the United States after 1791, see: Patricia A. Reid, "The Haitian Revolution, Black Petitioners, and Refugee Widows in Maryland, 1796-1820," *American Journal of Legal History*, 50, no. 4 (2008-2010), 431-452; Rebecca J. Scott and Jean M. Hébrard, *Freedom Papers: An Atlantic Odyssey in the Age of Emancipation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012).

⁶ The phrase "country born" was not exclusive to race. It was used colloquially to describe many fugitive laborers, including Euro-American servants and apprentices, who were born in continental America. Escaping slavery from rural Chester County, Phillis did not have a large community of Black people to rely on as did her urban counterparts living in Philadelphia. See, Jean R. Soderlund, "Black Women in Colonial Pennsylvania," in *African Americans in Pennsylvania: Shifting Historical Perspectives*, eds. Joe William Trotter Jr. and Eric Ledell Smith (Philadelphia: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 75.

⁷ "Ran away from the subscriber," *Freeman's Journal*; or, *the North-American Intelligencer*, December 1, 1784, [2].

⁸ William Bishop Schuyler, "Christ's Church—Then St. Agnes Church," *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia*, 54, no. 2 (June, 1943), 112.

⁹ *Forges and Furnaces in the Province of Pennsylvania*, (Lancaster, PA: The New Era Printing Company, 1914), 69.

¹⁰ "Sixteen Dollars Reward." *Aurora General Advertiser* (Philadelphia), March 15, 1798, [3]. In 1798, a young apprentice, named Jacob Scanlan, liberated himself from Lewis's home, near Warwick Furnace in East Nantmeal.

¹¹ Robert Sayer And John Bennett, and William Scull. A map of Pennsylvania exhibiting not only the improved parts of that Province, but also its extensive frontiers: Laid down from actual surveys and chiefly from the late map of W. Scull published in; and humbly inscribed to the Honourable Thomas Penn and Richard Penn, Esquires, true and absolute proprietaries & Governors of the Province of Pennsylvania and the territories thereunto belonging. London, Printed for Robt. Sayer & J. Bennett, 1775. Map. <https://www.loc.gov/item/74692507/>.

¹² Nash, "A City of Refuge," *Forging Freedom*, 134-171.

Ultimately, we do not know if Phillis's attempt to free herself was successful. Reprints of the notice Lewis published in the *Freedman's Journal* indicate that she remained at large for at least two weeks. However brief the period might have been, Phillis was a free woman.¹³

¹³ There is no timestamp on the advertisement to indicate when Phillis self-liberated. The print date for the newspaper alone is not sufficient evidence to determine when an enslaved person fled, as enslavers often waited a period of time, a significant amount in some cases, before turning to the press. There were two reprints of the advertisements in the *Freedman's Journal*: FJ, December 8, 1784, [1]; FJ, December 15, 1784, [1].

**CALIFORNIA
HISTORY
DAY**

NATIONAL HISTORY DAY – CALIFORNIA 2026



National History Day is a yearly showcase for K-12 students to display their passion for social studies in a competitive space at the county, state, and national level. Students create individual and group projects to showcase their ability to formulate and prove historical arguments. From there they engage with primary and secondary sources, while operating within an annual theme for the competition. The theme for this year was “revolution, reaction, and reform.” Student projects consisted of posters, exhibits, performances, documentaries, websites, podcasts, and historical essays.

The essays that follow are the senior division winners of the National History Day 2026 state competition, which was held at California State University, Sacramento. The articles are presented here just as they were entered into the competition and without further editing.

THE INDIAN REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1934: REVOLUTION, REACTION, AND REFORM IN FEDERAL INDIAN POLICY

ANIRVINYAA BANGOLE

I decided to research the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) of 1934 because I wanted to know how federally recognized tribes and communities reacted to shifting federal Indian policy during the New Deal era, and how this period marked a change in the nature of federal responsibility to tribes. The annual theme of Revolution, Reaction, Reform resonates strongly with the IRA. It marked a new era of federal government responsibility toward tribes, and brought to light issues of tribal rights to self-governance, land, and sovereignty. The contrast between perceived progressivism and resulting tension between federal authority and Native self-determination surrounding the IRA makes this an interesting subject to investigate.

My research began with secondary sources to better understand the history of assimilation and allotment policies, using historians and authors such as Frederick Hoxie, Francis Paul Prucha, and Vine Deloria Jr. in order to build a body of primary and secondary material as a basis for deciding on the topic for my thesis. In addition, I reviewed congressional hearing documents, Bureau of Indian Affairs reports, indigenous peoples' petitions, and the draft constitutions of the Navajo, Hopi, and other tribes in order to examine how both the federal government and Native leaders impacted, and responded to, the reform efforts reflected in the IRA.

I organized my research chronologically, tracing the failures of allotment, the development of reform under John Collier, and the varied tribal responses to the IRA. I focused on integrating primary evidence to support my analysis and demonstrate historical complexity.

My historical argument is that the Indian Reorganization Act represented a revolutionary shift away from forced assimilation toward tribal self-government, but its implementation revealed continued federal control and limitations on true sovereignty.

This history is significant because it redefined the relationship between the federal government and Native tribes, and serves as an important foundation upon which modern Native political movements rest today, influencing current debates regarding sovereignty, governance, and federal responsibilities.

The land was disappearing. Between 1887 and 1934, Native nations lost nearly two-thirds of the land base they had held at the end of the nineteenth century.¹ Communal territories were carved into individual allotments; surplus lands were sold to non-Native settlers. As the 1928 Meriam Report bluntly concluded, "the policy of allotment has been disastrous in its results,"² noting that it had resulted in widespread land loss and economic instability. Children were taken from their families and sent to distant boarding schools where they were punished for speaking their languages. The Meriam Report further observed that "the provisions for the care of the Indian children in boarding schools are grossly inadequate."³ Furthermore, the report emphasized that "poverty is almost universal on the reservations visited,"⁴ directly linking such hardship to federal policy, since federal agents dictated nearly every aspect of tribal governance. The Indian Reorganization Act (IRA), enacted by Congress in 1934, dramatically changed the direction of American policymaking in the areas of Native American land, culture, and governance. Although the IRA was passed during democratic reconstruction following the Great Depression, it didn't arise from a single point in time or place, but was part of a continuum of more than 100 years of federal policy exerted against Native nations. This was through a process marked by Native resistance and calls for reform from within the federal government. The act itself opened a new chapter for Native nations and Indigenous governance in North

¹U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, "Indian Law and Policy," Indian Law and Policy Overview

²Lewis Meriam et al., *The Problem of Indian Administration* (1928), 3.

³Meriam et al., *The Problem of Indian Administration*, 369.

⁴Meriam et al., *The Problem of Indian Administration*, 41.

America as evidenced by ongoing debates, oppositions, and adaptations. Reform isn't a clean break from the past; it's an interaction between policy development and ongoing responses, producing new structures that both extend old policies and introduce new ones. This dynamic is essential to understanding the true impact of the Indian Reorganization Act. It represented a revolutionary reform in federal Indian policy by ending allotment and promoting tribal self-government. However, it simultaneously preserved federal control through imposed political structures and administrative oversight, revealing that reform was not a complete transfer of power but a reconfiguration of it shaped by both Native resistance and federal limitations.

Revolutionary Policy: Allotment and Assimilation

Federal Indian policy had changed dramatically by the late 1800's from treaties to aggressive assimilation into American society. Central to this revolution was the Dawes Act of 1887, which aimed, in the words of reform advocates, to transform Native people into "self-supporting American citizens"⁵ through private land ownership. Reformers believed that communal landholding was an impediment to "progress,"⁶ and that allotting private property to individual Native Americans would transform them into self-supporting farmers. Historian Frederick Hoxie describes the allotment was designed to "destroy tribalism and absorb the Indian into American society,"⁷ leading to massive land loss and cultural disruption. In actuality, allotting Indian land to individuals split up existing tribal economies and caused the loss of millions of acres⁸ of Native land forever to non-Native ownership. The Congressional hearings of the 1920's tell the story of how allotment eroded the economic security and political cohesiveness of tribes. Reports compiled by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) in the late 1920's showed terrible poverty, malnutrition, and a lack of medical facilities for those on the reservations as a result of their allotment status.⁹ Rather than "civilizing"¹⁰ Native Americans, allotments created Indian people who were dependent on others and landless. Assimilation included much more than just land. Government-operated, off-reservation boarding and industrial schools were established specifically to destroy the Native American individual and replace them with a mainstream American citizen. Altering children's lives took many forms, such as removing Indian children from their families, cutting their hair, prohibiting them from speaking their traditional languages, and enforcing a military discipline.¹¹ Captain Richard Henry Pratt, founder of Carlisle Indian Industrial School, famously declared the goal was to "kill the Indian in him, and save the man"¹², a phrase that encapsulated the philosophy of forced cultural transformation. Initially, the Indian Rights Association and other reform societies applauded the establishment of these boarding and industrial schools, but later condemned them for the brutality and destruction of culture that they witnessed within their operation. The governing tribes became less stable; the systems for managing common resources were dismantled; and spiritual and cultural practices were suppressed. These policies represented an attempt by non-Indians to change how Native peoples live in accordance with the values of Euro-Americans. However, revolutions provoked a reaction.

Reaction: Native Resistance and Federal Reassessment

Native American nations actively fought back during the early part of the 21st century; they petitioned Congress, wrote letters to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, organized politically for the defense of their land and authority over their own people. For example, the Navajo Tribal Council discussed the impacts of allotment and then delib-

⁵U.S. Congress, House Committee on Indian Affairs, Hearings on Allotment (1924).

⁶U.S. Congress, House Committee on Indian Affairs, Hearings on Allotment (1924).

⁷Frederick E. Hoxie, *A Final Promise* (1984), 5.

⁸U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, "Indian Law and Policy," Indian Law and Policy Overview

⁹Meriam et al., *The Problem of Indian Administration*.

¹⁰Frederick E. Hoxie, *A Final Promise* (1984), 5.

¹¹Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, "American Indian Boarding School.

¹²Richard Henry Pratt, speech, 1892.

erated on the provisions of the IRA.¹³ Similarly, both the Hopi and Cherokee Nations wrote letters about their concerns over the loss of land and intrusion into their lives by the federal government.¹⁴ News articles were written in such newspapers as *The Indian Leader* to document the opposition by individuals and tribes to the loss of land through allotment, and to encourage the continuing of traditional cultural practices. The debate over policies unfolded in the national media during the decade. Newspaper accounts, such as from the *New York Times*, expressed both positive views of the reforms and negative feelings about the additional powers of the federal government and how they would affect all citizens, demonstrating that the IRA was contested across American society.¹⁵ The release of a 1928 study by the US government *The Problem of Indian Administration*, or commonly referred to as the Meriam Report, demonstrated the failures of both allotment and assimilation. The report showed the poverty of Native Americans on reservations, their poor health, and their poor educational opportunities were all a direct result of federal policies. As a result, the Meriam report recommended an end to allotment and the restitution of tribal lands and encouraged Native Americans to govern themselves. The publication of *The Meriam Report* was a significant event in history, as the report demonstrated along with many other factors that the policy of assimilation had failed. The Great Depression intensified economic suffering nationwide, and reformers within President Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration began reconsidering Indian policy as part of the broader New Deal. John Collier was the appointed Commissioner of Indian Affairs in 1933, and he was seen as the main architect of reform. In "A New Deal for Indians," Collier wrote that "the time has come to end the effort to make the Indian over into a pale imitation of the white man"¹⁶, asserting that tribal cultures and communal traditions were assets to be celebrated, not hindrances to reform. Collier's vision represented a major ideological shift from assimilation to cultural pluralism. However, the reform would only be accomplished through the legislative process and through the acceptance of the Native nations themselves.

Reform: The Indian Reorganization Act of 1934

The Indian Reorganization Act was passed by Congress in June of 1934 and was intended to undo many of the harmful aspects of previous policy. The statute formally declared that "hereafter no land of any Indian reservation...shall be allotted in severalty to any Indian,"¹⁷ marking a legal break from the Dawes framework. The Act ended the allotment of any more tribal lands, and it allowed surplus tribal lands to be returned to the tribes who originally owned them. The Act also established the procedure for tribes to write constitutions and to elect governing councils. It created a revolving credit fund that could be used for the purpose of economic development.¹⁸ There is both enthusiasm and skepticism reflected through the *Congressional Record* of the debates over the Act. Supporters of the IRA framed it as the needed moral correction to past injustices against Native Americans. During Senate hearings, Collier described the IRA as "an act of justice to the Indian people,"¹⁹ emphasizing restoration of land and governance. On the other hand, there were doubts that the Act would give too much autonomy to Native American tribes, while others thought it expanded federal bureaucracies. Tribal reactions were equally varied. For example, Ramon Roubideaux explained in an interview in 1968 that the IRA represented a significant turning point in allowing tribes to rebuild their own government systems after many years of having those systems disrupt-

¹³Navajo Tribal Council, Resolution Regarding Allotment and the Indian Reorganization Act, 1935, Navajo Nation Archives.

¹⁴Hopi Tribal Council, Letters to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1933–1934, National Archives and Records Administration; Kiowa Tribe, Letters to Congress on IRA Governance, 1934, National Archives and Records Administration

¹⁵"A Lift for the Forgotten Red Man, Too; A New Deal Is Proposed for American Indians," *New York Times*, May 6, 1934.

¹⁶John Collier, "A New Deal for Indians," *Survey Graphic* (May 1933), 245.

¹⁷Indian Reorganization Act, 48 Stat. 984 (1934), §1.

¹⁸Indian Reorganization Act (1934).

¹⁹U.S. Senate Hearings on the Indian Reorganization Act (1934).

ed.²⁰ The Act helped to restore a measure of political voice to native communities, even if it did not fully eliminate federal control. These statements are evidence that while the IRA did contain limitations, to some tribal leaders it represented a significant step towards sovereignty. Some tribes welcomed the opportunity for formal self-governance. For example, the Menominee Tribe adopted resolutions endorsing the implementation of the IRA,²¹ while the Choctaw Nation formally requested to be recognized as the governing body of their tribe's sovereignty under the new framework.²² Ratification ballots from the Seminole and Shoshone-Bannock Tribes document active participation in constitutional approval processes.²³ Other tribes did not support the IRA. The Navajo Nation held a referendum in 1935 to reject the IRA because of previous suspicions about the federal government and dissatisfaction with reducing livestock owners' animals.²⁴ The Oneida Nation objected to some of the provisions of the IRA by petitioning for justice for those tribes whose traditional governing systems were not reflected in the imposed constitution by the IRA.²⁵ The diversity of the responses above illustrates that there were clashing ideas and attitudes toward this Act and that policies and laws passed may not have the desired effects. Although the IRA promoted self-government, its structure ensured that federal authority remained firmly embedded within tribal governance. Since tribal constitutions required approval from the Secretary of the Interior, sovereignty wasn't fully restored. Instead, it was redefined within a framework of continued federal oversight.

Implementation and Organizational Transformation

The IRA influenced how to manage tribes. In addition to creating Indians' self-governance through the establishment of tribal constitutions and Councils, tribes developed formal tripartite governments containing executive, legislative, and judicial branches through Administrative Departments. Menominee and Apache Tribes provided an annual report to their legislation regarding how they implemented resource management, zoning, and educational systems in consideration of the Act. The Crow and Pueblo Tribes negotiated provisions related to land and water rights, demonstrating how reform intersected with resource sovereignty. Blackfeet petitions regarding culturally appropriate education reflect ongoing efforts to adapt federal frameworks to tribal priorities.²⁶ However, economic challenges still persisted. Reservations' economies were still impacted by the long-standing millennia of loss of reservation lands and resources to build self-sustaining economies through governmental programs. The IRA provided tribes a way to access federal assistance program funding and greater management over those resources. Historians have debated the effectiveness of these reforms. Lawrence C. Kelly describes the IRA as both "dream and reality,"²⁷ acknowledging its achievements while noting limitations. Thomas Biolsi's studies of Lakota communities reveal how local politics shaped implementation, sometimes reinforcing internal power struggles.²⁸ Vine Deloria Jr. later critiqued federal Indian policy more broadly, arguing that true sovereignty required greater in-

²⁰Ramon Roubideaux, "It Set Aside the Indian as a 'Problem,'" interview, *History Matters: The U.S. Survey Course on the Web*, accessed June 17, 2026, gmu.edu.

²¹Bureau of Indian Affairs, *Annual Reservation Reports, 1935–1937* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1935–1937).

²²Choctaw Nation, *Petition on Tribal Governance*, 1934, National Archives and Records Administration.

²³United States Congress, *Senate Hearings on the Indian Reorganization Act* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1934).

²⁴Navajo Tribal Council, *Resolution Regarding Allotment and the Indian Reorganization Act*, 1935, Navajo Nation Archives.

²⁵Oglala Sioux Tribe, *Petition to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1935, National Archives and Records Administration.

²⁶Bureau of Indian Affairs, *Letters and Memos from Regional Supervisors, 1932–1934*, National Archives and Records Administration, Record Group 75.

²⁷Lawrence C. Kelly, "The Indian Reorganization Act: The Dream and the Reality," *Pacific Historical Review* 44, no. 3 (1975): 291–312.

²⁸Thomas Biolsi, *Organizing the Lakota: The Political Economy of the New Deal on the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations*

dependence from federal oversight.²⁹ These various interpretations highlight the complexity of the IRA. While the reforms have created changes in tribal structures, the reforms did not necessarily remove or diminish the historical disparities in power between tribal and non-tribal governments.

Reaction to Reform: Termination and the Limits of Change

The story did not end in 1934. The federal government changed course again during the subsequent decade (1940s and 1950s) in order to pursue a policy of termination and relocation of Indian people through legislation aimed at eliminating tribal governmental structures and facilitating migration to urban centers. Donald Fixico's research helps to demonstrate how these shifting federal policies undermined much of the progress produced under the IRA. The governance structures developed and instituted during the IRA era have proven to be durable, as tribes have relied upon their constitutional authority to successfully challenge the implementation of termination policies, while simultaneously asserting treaty rights. The emergence of modern Native American political activism known as the Red Power movement during the 1960s and 1970s drew upon many of the institutions created under the IRA. The Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 was based upon the principle that tribes should administer their own programs and activities.³⁰ Charles Wilkinson's *Blood Struggle* traces how today's tribal governments have utilized the institutional foundations created under the IRA to expand their respective sovereign powers in the areas of natural resource management, economic development, and legal authority. As Charles Wilkinson notes, modern tribal governments used these institutional frameworks to assert treaty rights and resource control, describing the 20th century as a "blood struggle"³¹ for sovereignty built upon IRA foundations. Thus, while the IRA did not secure complete autonomy, it created institutional tools that Native nations later employed to advance sovereignty claims.

Multiple Perspectives: Federal Officials, and Scholars

Federal reformers such as John Collier believed they were making reparations and promoting respect for other cultures. BIA correspondence showed concern for the conditions on reservations.³² For example, historian Francis Paul Prucha determines that the Indian Reorganization Act is part of a larger pattern of federal paternalism.³³ Frederick Hoxie emphasizes the ideological shift from assimilation to pluralism.³⁴ Wilkins and Lomawaima analyze the uneven terrain of sovereignty, arguing that federal power remained deeply entrenched.³⁵ These interpretations demonstrate that the IRA cannot be fully understood as either emancipatory or oppressive; rather, it is shaped through the contesting interests of many different people.

Conclusion: A Reform That Reshaped Sovereignty

Ultimately, the Indian Reorganization Act illustrates that reform in American history is rarely absolute. While it marked a decisive break from the destructive policies of allotment and assimilation, it simultaneously restructured, rather than eliminated, federal authority over Native nations. Its greatest significance is the institutional foundation it created for future generations. The governments, constitutions, and political frameworks established

²⁹Vine Deloria Jr., *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (New York: Macmillan, 1969)

³⁰Donald L. Fixico, *Termination and Relocation: Federal Indian Policy, 1945–1960* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986), 185–190.

³¹Charles F. Wilkinson, *Blood Struggle* (2005), 6.

³²Bureau of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1933 (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1933).

³³Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians*

³⁴Frederick E. Hoxie, *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880–1920* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984)

³⁵David E. Wilkins and K. Tsianina Lomawaima, *Uneven Ground: American Indian Sovereignty and Federal Law* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001)

under the IRA became essential tools for Native activism during the Red Power movement and beyond, shaping modern struggles for sovereignty, self-determination, and legal recognition. In this way, the IRA was not the end of federal control, but the beginning of a new phase of negotiation—one in which Native nations increasingly asserted their power within and against the structures imposed upon them.

THE JAMKHED MODEL: HOW ADDRESSING RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS IN MEDICINE LED TO A REVOLUTIONARY MODEL OF HEALTHCARE THAT INFLUENCED GLOBAL REFORM DESPITE RESISTANCE

SIRI CHUNDRU

During my childhood visits to India, my father would tell me stories of my grandfather heroically saving farmers bitten by poisonous snakes. Instead of taking them to clinics, my grandfather brought them to village healers who used religious rituals as remedies. Upon researching the role of religious traditions in medical contexts, I learned that many rural communities relied on indigenous healers and long-held customs in the absence of accessible institutional care. These practices often functioned as treatments or cures, but were scientifically ineffective and did little to improve patient health. While exploring healthcare programs that addressed the resulting poor public health outcomes, I came across the Comprehensive Rural Health Project (CRHP). Founded in 1970, CRHP reduced villagers' reliance on religious explanations for illness, a distinguishing accomplishment from earlier state-led approaches that mainly expanded access to clinical care. Through research on CRHP's various stakeholders, ranging from workers and patients to the WHO and the Indian government, I discovered that the program's use of village women to redirect medical trust was both revolutionary and controversial. CRHP challenged religious beliefs in medical decision-making and redistributed authority to women, inciting resistance from internal program staff as well as external social and religious authorities. Only by persisting through opposition did the program succeed in promoting measurable improvements in public health and inspire global programmatic reform in primary healthcare frameworks.

To gather evidence supporting my argument, I first contacted managers at the National Archives of India. After realizing that the archive's holdings did not contain substantial material related to CRHP, I began tracing primary documents cited in secondary sources and expanded my research to include government reports, early program evaluations, and publications by international health organizations. My most productive research came from school and public library databases using targeted keywords related to CRHP, religion in medicine, and female community health workers. This led me to identify a gap in the literature surrounding a critical element of CRHP, as public health officials often overlooked the connection between behavioral change and the religious mindsets of patients. I chose to present my project as a paper because I wanted to expand my analysis and explanation in a way only an essay could. From there, I drafted and repeatedly edited my paper.

Ultimately, my paper argues that addressing religious explanations for illness was fundamental to CRHP's success in improving public health and restructuring medical authority. If villagers solely relied on traditional remedies, they would be skeptical of institutional care. By systematically shifting villagers' attitudes toward medicine, CRHP persisted through resistance and ultimately shaped global health reforms that promoted decentralized rural healthcare models. These reforms remain an international ideal of primary healthcare, and continue to set an example for rural medical infrastructure in regions that require a radical shift in scientific trust to improve public health.

In the rural Indian district of Ahmednagar, a few hundred doctors shouldered care for more than one million patients.¹ Low-ranked Dalits, born outside of the caste system and considered impure, had limited access to healthcare and education.² Indigenous peoples like the Kolis followed ancient customs, including washing lying-in rooms

¹ "Health Services," The Gazetteers Department - Ahmadnagar, https://gazetteers.maharashtra.gov.in/cultural.maharashtra.gov.in/english/gazetteer/Ahmadnagar/medical_health_serv.html.

² Louis Dumont, *Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and Its Implications, complete revised english ed.*, trans. Mark Sainsbury and Basia Gulati (1960; repr., Oxford University Press, 1981), 47, https://ia902908.us.archive.org/11/items/in.ernet.dli.2015.149555/2015.149555.Homo-Hierarchicus_text.pdf; Vina M. Goghari and Mavis Kusi, "An Introduction to the Basic Elements of the Caste System of India," *Frontiers in Psychology* 14 (December 2023): 2.

with “cowdung” to cleanse spiritual impurity.³ Child mortality was so high that villagers “would find the bones of children” in the ground during construction.⁴ By the 1960s, Ahmednagar’s healthcare faced scarce resources and caste-based restrictions to access. Furthermore, long-standing household traditions shaped health decisions in the absence of reliable institutional care, leading to poor hygiene and high disease prevalence.

At the center of this crisis were doctors Rajanikant and Mabelle Arole, who realized that clinical care had little impact on village health in Jamkhed, Ahmednagar.⁵ They spoke with residents to identify the underlying factors driving poor rural health: inaccessibility and behavioral barriers.⁶ The Aroles subsequently founded the Comprehensive Rural Health Project (CRHP) in 1970 to address these issues.⁷ CRHP taught village health workers (VHWs) how to provide basic medical care, challenged social biases by empowering low-caste individuals, and fostered trust in science-based medicine by disproving traditional beliefs.⁸

It is important to note that CRHP was not the first program that targeted rural healthcare in India. The union government’s development committee had already initiated efforts to expand medical infrastructure in 1946 under the leadership of Sir Joseph Bhole, who created the Bhole Committee report that mainly advocated for the establishment of primary health centers (PHCs) to provide clinical services in rural areas.⁹ While PHCs made professional care geographically accessible, they did not address the social and cultural obstacles to rural acceptance of institutional care. This prevented such clinics from operating effectively in the long term, as villagers did not trust clinical medicine even when it was available.¹⁰

Doctors today argue that CRHP’s social approach, which used community workers to overcome caste-based barriers and expand medical access, marked a revolutionary shift in public health programs.¹¹ However, addressing discrimination and inaccessibility do not in themselves improve rural trust in healthcare. The model was instead revolutionary for empowering women to challenge religious explanations of illness and for thus relocating medical authority from traditional treatments to institutional medicine. Provoking resistance from those who wished to maintain long-standing societal norms and religious beliefs, this strategy slowed the program’s initial expansion yet ultimately enabled CRHP to redefine global primary health care frameworks.

³ Gazetteers of the Bombay Presidency: Ahmadnagar District (Government of Maharashtra, 1884), 17: <https://gazetteers.maharashtra.gov.in/cultural.maharashtra.gov.in/english/gazetteer/Ahmednagar%20District/home.html>.

⁴ Henry Perry, “Henry Perry’s Notes of 1997 Visit to Jamkhed,” unpublished manuscript, January 6, 1997, 11.

⁵ Rajanikant S. Arole, “Comprehensive Rural Health Project Jamkhed, India,” *Contact*, August 1972, 5.

⁶ Arole, “Comprehensive Rural,” 5.

⁷ “A Rural Health Project Comes Of Age,” *The Times of India*, May 23, 1976, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

⁸ Center for High Impact Philanthropy, Community-Based Health And Development Programs, 2012, https://www.impact.upenn.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/2015/03/121206_Jamkhed-FINAL.pdf.

⁹ Alisha Handa et al., “Joseph William Bhole (1878-1960): The Architect behind the Bhole Committee Legacy,” *Cureus*, August 21, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.7759/cureus.67405>; Health Survey and Development Committee, Recommendations, vol. 2, *Report of the Health Survey and Development Committee* (Delhi: Manager of Publications, 1946), 39, <https://ruralindiaonline.org/en/library/resource/report-of-the-health-survey-and-development-committee-vol-ii/>.

¹⁰ Harold A. Gould, “Modern Medicine and Folk Cognition in Rural India,” *Human Organization* 24, no. 3 (1965): 1, <http://www.jstor.org/harker.idm.oclc.org/stable/44125130>.

¹¹ Henry B. Perry and Jon Rohde, “The Jamkhed Comprehensive Rural Health Project and the Alma-Ata Vision of Primary Health Care,” *American Journal of Public Health* 109, no. 5 (2019).

Background

For the first time, in 1946, the Indian government formally acknowledged that rural access to healthcare was limited.¹² Ahmednagar saw a disparity in medical access between urban and rural areas even in the early 1960's. The district's countryside was too vast and decentralized to rely on institutional medicine, with "one doctor for a population group of 4,475" in the villages compared to one for a group of 807 in the cities.¹³ Geographically sparse clinics left trained personnel concentrated in select regions, leading villagers to believe that "doctors never cure[d] anybody."¹⁴ When professionals failed to provide support, communities instead pragmatically selected folk medicine that better suited their needs.¹⁵ The resulting dependence on tradition consolidated medical authority in indigenous home remedies rather than in hospitals. Simply increasing the number of physicians available, therefore, would not redistribute trust or promote the usage of institutional care.

In such a household-centered culture, women occupied a prominent role as caregivers and filled the gaps left by often unavailable professionals. Rural villagers relied especially heavily on *dais*, or traditional birth attendants (TBAs), whom they consulted for "any condition of the mother related to birth."¹⁶ The Bhore Committee further emphasized that *dais* held "great influence over the people" and served as the primary voices of authority on maternal healthcare.¹⁷ By training each new generation of TBAs, the *dais* passed on medical knowledge, underlying biases, and traditional beliefs. Their role in maintaining a cycle of customs made them the most important vessels for promoting reliance on clinical medicine. Without the training to do so, however, *dais* continued to nurture traditions and perpetuate long-held religious beliefs about medical treatment.

Although trusted by villagers, indigenous solutions both proved ineffective and deterred rural communities from adopting medical treatments. For example, in Ahmednagar and rural districts throughout India, smallpox breakouts were difficult to contain because communities thought patients were possessed by the goddess *Sitala* and visited exorcists (*devrushis*) for treatment.¹⁸ Villagers danced and played musical instruments to appease the deity (Appendix A). Idols were made of cow dung or earth to represent the angered goddess.¹⁹ At other times, indigenous healers gave patients sugar or balls of jawari flour as cures.²⁰ Aside from traditional treatments, no medicine would be "accepted beyond the water in which sacred nim leaves were soaking."²¹ If the religious customs that served as medicine in the countryside remained unaddressed, the Aroles could not introduce new beliefs about treatment without inviting resistance rooted in faith. At this point in history, when rural trust in medicine was lacking, CRHP emerged with a novel approach to public healthcare programs.

¹² Health Survey and Development Committee, Recommendations, 39.

¹³ "Health Services," The Gazetteers Department - Ahmadnagar.

¹⁴ McKim Marriott and Walter B. Miller, "Western Medicine in a Village of Northern India," in *Health, Culture, and Community*, by Benjamin D. Paul (Russell Sage Foundation, 1955), 239-68, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7758/9781610444422.13>.

¹⁵ Gould, "Modern Medicine," 1.

¹⁶ Manju Chhugani, "Midwifery in India and its roadmap," *Journal of Asian Midwives* 1, no. 1 (2014): 34, <https://ecommons.aku.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=10048&context=jam>; Health Survey and Development Committee, Recommendations, 399.

¹⁷ Health Survey and Development Committee, Recommendations, 399.

¹⁸ C. Brown, *Akola District*, vol. A, Central Provinces and Berar District Gazetteers (Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1910), <https://archive.org/details/dli.ministry.07845/mode/2up>; Gazetteers of the Bombay Presidency, 17

¹⁹ Babagrahi Misra, "Sitala: The Small-Pox Goddess of India," *Asian Ethnology* 28, no. 2 (1969): 136, <https://asianethnology.org/volume/28-2>.

²⁰ Brown, *Akola District*

²¹ Brown, *Akola District*

Revolution

In 1970, the Aroles moved to Jamkhed with the sole intent of improving local public health.²² The two doctors served a population of 100,000 villagers, with 4,000 births each year.²³ Only 300 of those deliveries were attended to by the doctors themselves, leaving them to wonder “[w]hat happened to the remaining 3700.”²⁴ Furthermore, infant mortality rates were high for unmonitored births; out of every 1,000 deliveries, 176 children were stillborn.²⁵ Through ministering to patients and attempting to gain the community’s trust, the Aroles observed that these poor health outcomes were shaped not only by inaccessibility but also by caste disparities and customs. Subsequently, the Aroles founded the Comprehensive Rural Health Project (CRHP): a novel holistic approach that both expanded access to healthcare and increased trust in professional aid.

Known also as the Jamkhed Model, CRHP innovatively trained illiterate women as village health workers (VHW) to perform basic medical procedures.²⁶ The program required each VHW to “belong” to a village because her role in rural societies allowed her to become the “vital link between the community she serve[d] and the professional health team.”²⁷ This decentralized system of VHWs directly contrasted the Bhore Committee’s earlier recommendation to establish clinical PHCs. By drawing on the preexisting trust these women held in their communities, CRHP built relationships between villagers and medical professionals and bypassed the rural barrier to acceptance.

CRHP also distinguished itself by deliberately selecting low-caste women as VHWs.²⁸ The program trained these women to be educators and disseminate medical knowledge, ultimately helping them gain respect and recognition from their communities.²⁹ CRHP addressed both a lack of resources and social stratification in healthcare by elevating lower-caste individuals with normally inaccessible training. Over time, CRHP reduced maternal mortality rates to 50% of India’s average.³⁰ Infant mortality rates sharply declined to 8 stillborn children out of every 1000.³¹ Public health researchers commonly infer that these remarkable health improvements resulted from addressing caste and inaccessibility, citing these as the most critical and radical barriers tackled by the Jamkhed Model.³²

CRHP’s true novelty, however, actually stemmed from how the program dismantled religious explanations for disease to center authority on clinical treatment. Prior interventions struggled because tradition dictated treatment regardless of caste or accessibility. For instance, leprosy was “specifically regarded as a punishment for sin” from angry deities.³³ Uninfected villagers considered patients “impure” and expected them to receive care in sep-

²² Arole, “Comprehensive Rural,” 1.

²³ Arole, “Comprehensive Rural,” 1.

²⁴ Arole, “Comprehensive Rural,” 1.

²⁵ Sarla Chand and Jaqui Patterson, *Faith-Based Models for Improving Maternal and Newborn Health*, 14, September 2007, https://imaworldhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/faith_based_models_for_improving_maternal_and_newborn_health.pdf.

²⁶ “A Rural Health Project”

²⁷ Rajanikant Arole, “Comprehensive Rural Health Project, Jamkhed,” *Medico Friend Circle Bulletins* 46 (January 1980): 2, <https://www.mfcindia.org/mfcpdfs/MFC049.pdf>.

²⁸ Center for High Impact Philanthropy, Community-Based Health, 5.

²⁹ Center for High Impact Philanthropy, Community-Based Health, 5.

³⁰ “The Comprehensive Rural Health Project, Jamkhed,” The Center for High Impact Philanthropy, University of Pennsylvania, <https://www.impact.upenn.edu/crhp-jamkhed/>.

³¹ Center for High Impact Philanthropy, Community-Based Health, 7.

³² Perry and Rohde, “The Jamkhed.”

³³ W. Crooke, “The Popular Religion & Folk-lore Of Northern India (Archibald Constable, 1896),” vol1:125, <https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.180859/mode/2up>.

arate clinics so as not to spiritually taint the other ill (Appendix B).³⁴ Without disproving long-standing beliefs, CRHP's focus on caste or medical training would have been ineffectual. Reducing caste bias would bridge communities but fail to redirect reliance to medicine. Trained VHWs could increase access to healthcare but not its usage when competing with trusted household remedies. By explicitly challenging spiritual rationales, CRHP prompted VHWs to reconsider and lessen their dependence on traditional practices.

The Jamkhed Model also innovatively enabled women to foster ideological change. After scientifically explaining leprosy, the Aroles convinced VHWs that the disease was not a divine curse and could be treated by them instead.³⁵ The Jamkhed Model tempered the importance of tradition using a "systematic teaching of science and inductive knowledge."³⁶ Once women relinquished their old beliefs, "right attitudes towards health and nutrition" took their place.³⁷ VHWs were trained to reinterpret illness through observable evidence and became "the most ardent promoters of change."³⁸ CRHP proved that addressing religious explanations was the most critical aspect of redirecting rural reliance from tradition to institutional care. Compared to previous healthcare efforts, such as the Bhole Committee's PHCs, the Jamkhed Model was revolutionary because it restructured medical authority.

Reaction

Unfortunately, the same social barriers that CRHP sought to dismantle also invited resistance. Empowering women and reorganizing village hierarchies defied norms that had stood for centuries. Among the most notable opponents were politicians who feared disturbing the patriarchy of rural Indian communities (Appendix C). When the Aroles first began their project, the Health Minister "would not allow anyone except MDs to practice medicine."³⁹ In turn, the doctors were forced to limit the information they taught VHWs and program nurses.⁴⁰ Political officials also disregarded the Jamkhed Model's success and instead pursued medical colleges in urban areas.⁴¹ These private institutions charged exorbitant tuition while "continuing to churn out doctors who only wanted to practice in the city."⁴² Without federal support, CRHP ultimately reached only 900,000 out of 68.7 million villagers in rural Maharashtra.⁴³ By dismissing the Jamkhed Model as unnecessary, political opponents significantly slowed its expansion.

Politicians were not the only ones capable of improving the program's resources. Physicians from the Indian Medical Association, who could support CRHP's expansion by training VHWs, challenged the idea that rural medical practitioners could serve as authoritative figures in their place. The lobby argued that following through

³⁴ Sanjiv Kakar, "Leprosy in British India, 1860–1940: Colonial Politics and Missionary Medicine," *Medical History* 40, no. 2 (1996): 218, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0025727300061019>.

³⁵ Arole, "Comprehensive Rural," 2.

³⁶ Government of India, Report of the Backwards Classes Commission (The Manager Government of India Press, 1956), 1:17, <https://ia801409.us.archive.org/15/items/in.ernet.dli.2015.45939/2015.45939.Report-Of-The-Backward-Classes-Commission--Vol-1.pdf>.

³⁷ Arole, "Comprehensive Rural," 2.

³⁸ Arole, "Comprehensive Rural," 2.

³⁹ Perry, "Henry Perry's," 5.

⁴⁰ Perry, "Henry Perry's," 5.

⁴¹ Darryl D'Monte, "'Barefoot' In The Village: A Scheme For Rural Health," *The Times of India*, April 19, 1973, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

⁴² "Dr. Arole flays philosophy of drug industry," *The Times of India*, March 4, 1980, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

⁴³ "Comprehensive Rural Health Project," CRHP, last modified 2024, <https://www.crhpinia.org/>; Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation Ministry of Jal Shakti (GOI), "State wise number of Rural Population as on (01/04/2025)," Jal Jeevan Mission, last modified January 4, 2025, https://ejalshakti.gov.in/JJM/JJMReports/BasicInformation/JJMRep_RWS_RuralPopulation.aspx.

with this decentralization would be a “legalization of quackery” since rural healthcare workers lacked formal training.⁴⁴ This concern masked the underlying fear that VHWs would eventually gain more popularity than professionals.⁴⁵ Public health professor David Werner wrote that educated doctors often acted superior to patients, overcharged for treatments, and hoarded medical knowledge.⁴⁶ Introducing VHWs threatened the balance between physicians and patients, particularly because the women offered familiarity and comfort where doctors could not.⁴⁷ The association’s reluctance to train VHWs further hindered the program’s nationwide implementation.

Beyond external lobbies and policymakers, CRHP’s staff initially resisted the program’s disregard for traditional norms. One such standard was the stigmatized treatment of leprosy patients.⁴⁸ To the Aroles’ amazement, the largest objections to integrating leprosy patients with others came “not from the community, but from [their] own nurses.”⁴⁹ These ingrained traditional beliefs risked reaffirming discriminatory practices if passed between the nurses and VHWs. Yet the Aroles responded by continuing to treat leprosy patients like all others. After the doctors consistently emphasized the importance of receiving treatment to both patients and nurses, they normalized the presence of leprosy in medical settings and successfully treated 460 patients in 18 months.⁵⁰ CRHP’s revolutionary model did not unravel in the face of external and internal resistance but instead persisted through them and led to notable success that inspired national and international reform of public health models.

Reform

Despite the model’s success, global institutions first needed to determine whether the project was necessary before adopting its structure. Although CRHP improved medical outcomes, public health experts argued that indigenous healers were already moving toward institutional medicine.⁵¹ Dr. Neumann, head of the UCLA International Health Program, noted that rural healers were “increasingly influenced by modern medicine.”⁵² Some took patient histories, diagnosed illnesses, and prescribed medical treatments like clinical physicians while still using traditional medicines without aligning to any one system of care.⁵³ These cultural remedies sometimes worked: botanist Joseph Monachino noted the root of *Rauvolfia serpentina* had been used in Indian medicine long before Western scientists acknowledged its potential to treat high blood pressure.⁵⁴ If rural practitioners were achieving the Jamkhed Model’s goals of promoting scientifically effective treatments, the economically wiser decision would be not to invest in similar programs. However, applying clinically effective treatment did not necessarily equate to better systems of care. For instance, villagers saw *Rauvolfia serpentina* as a remedy for not only high blood pressure, but also “insanity, epilepsy, fits and eczema.”⁵⁵ Although some indigenous medicines worked, most were used in the

⁴⁴ D’Monte, “‘Barefoot’ In The Village”

⁴⁵ D’Monte, “‘Barefoot’ In The Village”

⁴⁶ David Werner, “The Village Health Worker: Lucky or Liberator?,” Health Wrights, last modified May 1977, <http://www.healthwrights.org/articles/the-village-health-worker-liberator-or-lucky/>.

⁴⁷ Arole, “Comprehensive Rural,” 7-8.

⁴⁸ Sydney H Schanberg Special to *The New York Times*, “Lepers in India Combat Feeling of Uselessness,” *The New York Times*, October 25, 1970, <https://www.nytimes.com/1970/10/25/archives/lepers-in-india-combat-feeling-of-uselessness.html>.

⁴⁹ Arole, “Comprehensive Rural,” 8.

⁵⁰ Arole, “Comprehensive Rural,” 8.

⁵¹ Alfred K. Neumann et al., “Role of the Indigenous Medicine Practitioner in Two Areas of India—Report of a Study,” *Social Science & Medicine* (1967) 5, no. 2 (1971): 1.

⁵² Neumann et al., “Role of the Indigenous,” 1.

⁵³ Neumann et al., “Role of the Indigenous,” 1.

⁵⁴ Joseph Monachino, “Rauvolfia Serpentina: Its History, Botany and Medical Use,” *Economic Botany* 8, no. 4 (1954): 350, <http://www.jstor.org/harker.idm.oclc.org/stable/4287824>.

⁵⁵ Monachino, “Rauvolfia Serpentina,” 350.

wrong context or had damaging side effects.⁵⁶ CRHP was therefore necessary because it challenged these traditional cures and accelerated villagers' adoption of modern medicine and medical systems.

In 1975, the Aroles described their healthcare system in a World Health Organization (WHO) manual.⁵⁷ Building on this early recognition, CRHP eventually influenced the WHO's standards for primary health care.⁵⁸ In the Alma-Ata Declaration of 1978, the WHO recommended for the first time that health programs take a holistic approach to public health by integrating "social and developmental dimensions."⁵⁹ The International Conference of Primary Health Care further wrote that effective medical programs depended on the "action of many other social and economic sectors" beyond medicine alone.⁶⁰ As one of the earliest examples of such a program, immunizing 95% of Jamkhed's children by 1997, CRHP helped establish a new baseline for global rural healthcare.⁶¹

National reforms also emerged when the Indian government drew inspiration from CRHP in 1977 to launch a large-scale rural healthcare project that trained 500,000 community health workers (CHWs).⁶² However, the government put little effort into execution, and only 60% of CHWs received medical treatment kits.⁶³ The project also overlooked the importance of community representation among health workers and instead selected relatives or friends of the initiative's supervisors.⁶⁴ Scholars Dandekar and Bhate further noted that this program missed the opportunity to employ women, as CHWs were often male and did not hold the same medical importance or authority as female *dais* within the village.⁶⁵ Ultimately, although national reforms under the CHW project did not succeed due to improper implementation, CRHP reformed global healthcare standards.

Conclusion

India's failure with the CHW program was not globally repeated. Eleven years after CRHP's founding, the Democratic Republic of Congo launched SANRU, a decentralized healthcare system that incorporated the Jamkhed Model framework.⁶⁶ Twenty-eight other countries soon followed.⁶⁷ CRHP's success and novel approach rewrote the standards for rural healthcare infrastructure worldwide, made possible only because the program's revolutionary dispelling of religious explanations shifted trust onto institutional care.⁶⁸ The Jamkhed Model's teachings

⁵⁶ Buddhi Paudyal et al., "Adverse Events with Ayurvedic Medicines- Possible Adulteration and Some Inherent Toxicities," *Wellcome Open Research* 4 (November 2019), <https://doi.org/10.12688/wellcomeopenres.15096.3>.

⁵⁷ "A Rural Health Project"

⁵⁸ Perry and Rohde, "The Jamkhed."

⁵⁹ Socrates Litsios, "The Christian Medical Commission and the Development of the World Health Organization's Primary Health Care Approach," *American Journal of Public Health* 94, no. 11 (2004): <https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.94.11.1884>; V. Kurup, "Delivering Primary Healthcare: A Global Action Plan," *The Times of India*, October 20, 1978, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

⁶⁰ "Declaration of Alma-Ata," World Health Organization, last modified September 1978, https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/documents/almaata-declaration-en.pdf?sfvrsn=7b3c2167_2.

⁶¹ Perry, "Henry Perry's," 7.

⁶² Rachel J. Strodel and Henry B. Perry, "The National Village Health Guide Scheme in India: Lessons Four Decades Later for Community Health Worker Programs Today and Tomorrow," *Human Resources for Health* 17, no. 1 (2019): <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12960-019-0413-1>.

⁶³ Peter A. Berman et al., "Community-based Health Workers: Head Start or False Start towards Health for All?," *Social Science & Medicine* 25, no. 5 (1987): 450.

⁶⁴ Kumudini Dandekar and Vijayanti Bhate, "Maharashtra's Rural Health Services Scheme: An Evaluation," *Economic and Political Weekly* 13, no. 50 (1978).

⁶⁵ Dandekar and Bhate, "Maharashtra's Rural."

⁶⁶ Chand and Patterson, Faith-Based Models, 3.

⁶⁷ "Comprehensive Rural Health Project," CRHP.

⁶⁸ Perry and Rohde, "The Jamkhed."

were conveyed by village women who played critical roles due to their pre-existing medical authority. Although the program's radical changes in hierarchy garnered external and internal resistance that slowed expansion, the Aroles' persistence led to improved health outcomes and an international remodeling of public health frameworks. Today, as global healthcare faces increasing challenges brought by urbanization, distrust in science, and the steady decline of rural hospitals, understanding the deeper processes of a decentralized medical system proves more essential than ever.

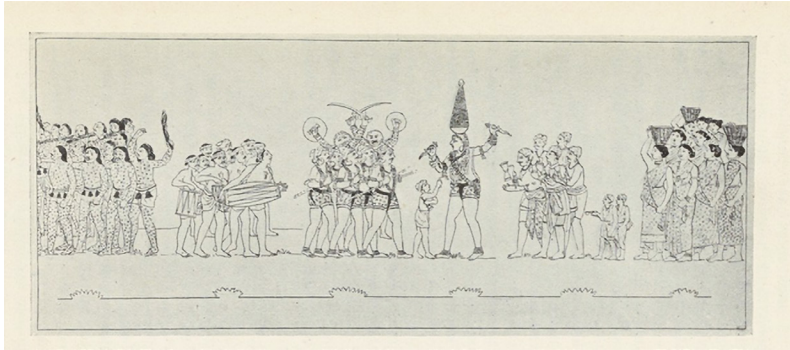


Figure 1. Smallpox Goddess. Smallpox patients received treatment through music and dance that appeased the goddess, *Sitala*. Source: *American Medical Association*. A Religious Dramatic Representation of the Power of the Hindoo Goddess of Smallpox. 1913. Illustration. <https://digital.sciencehistory.org/works/h2iyxek>.



Figure 2. Leprosy Hospital. The foundation of this specialized clinic for male leprosy patients demonstrates how villages expected the infected to be isolated from others. Source: George McGlashan Kerr. "Dichpali, Hyderabad: Laying the Foundation Stone of the New Men's Hospital at the Leprosy Hospital. Photograph by G.M. Kerr, 1935." JSTOR.

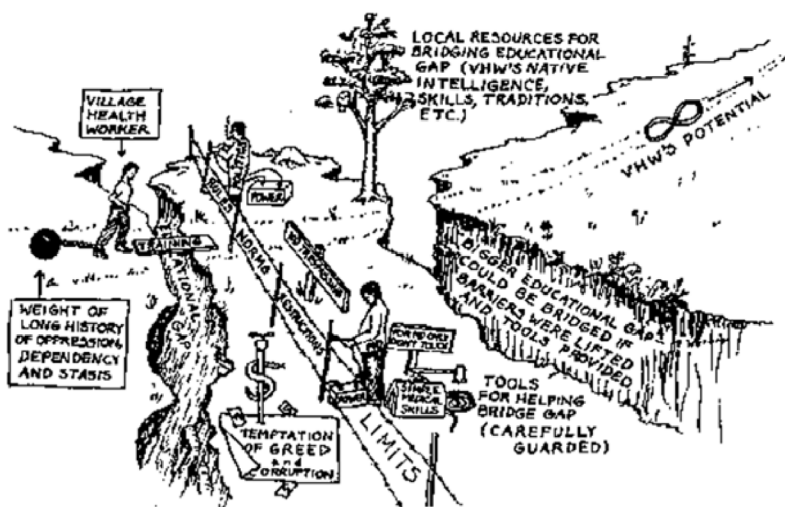


Figure 3. VHWS' Potential. Politicians and physicians restricted VHWs by enforcing norms to limit their potential. Source: David Werner. "The Village Health Worker: Lucky or Liberator?" *Health Wrights*. Last modified May 1977. <http://healthwrights.org/articles/the-village-health-worker-liberator-or-lucky/>

THE SAN FRANCISCO FREEWAY REVOLT: THE SEEDS OF REVOLUTION IN URBAN PLANNING

ADAM FIBRICH

Urban planning plays an important role in the lifestyle of anyone who lives in a city. As a second generation Czech-American, my interest in the subject stemmed from traveling to Prague every summer and feeling much more independent than in the Bay Area. In Prague, I could get on the tram or the subway alone at the age of twelve and cross the entire city. I used to make trips downtown by myself to a quaint cobbled alley that held the most delicious hot chocolate cafe on Earth. To me, visiting Prague meant freedom. When I came across the subject of urban design in eighth grade, I realized that all these fundamental differences were related to how the city was designed. While in the Bay Area I was dependent on the car even before I could drive, Prague had a robust and safe system of public transportation that allowed me to roam free. While my hometown has designated residential and commercial areas, the mixed use neighborhoods of Prague minimized travel time. As I learned more about urban design in high school, I came across the San Francisco Freeway Revolt, which was closely associated with the same aspects of Prague that I loved: diverse methods of transportation, and mixed use neighborhoods. I was delighted when I found out that I could write about such a local and revolutionary event for this year's National History Day. Any revolution worth its name not only affects local conditions, but changes the way people see the world. Much more than a fight to keep the city liveable and beautiful, the San Francisco Freeway Revolt sparked a nationwide movement towards a more democratic planning process in a time when autocratic and top-down planning was the norm.

For preliminary research, I visited the communities that freeways almost tore through in San Francisco, as well as the site where the Embarcadero Freeway once stood. Although it was demolished after the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, its outline remains visible in the landscape. Next, I interviewed a couple acquaintances with first-hand knowledge of the topic. Elizabeth McDonald, a professor of urban design at UC Berkeley, gave me a fascinating account of how she designed Octavia Boulevard to replace the Central Freeway after the same earthquake. Kristen Siddell, an architect and teacher, gave me a more solid foundation in relevant urban design theories. To gain a more first-hand perspective on the issue, I pored over the San Francisco Chronicle archive, in particular the fascinating Letters to the Editor, which not only added detail to the story, but gave voice to the arguments and ideas on both sides. I also consulted the Board of Supervisors original meeting minutes to understand the motivations of the political leaders. Finally, I read the pivotal urban design book of the era, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, by Jane Jacobs, as well as a number of academic and online-media secondary sources about the events and urban planning.

"What San Francisco needs is another 'Boston Tea Party.' Dump the freeway plans in the bay before they destroy San Francisco...We can still fight for our rights as they did in 1776!"¹ A revolution was stirring in San Francisco in the late 1950s, in which citizens fought to protect the city they held dear from a network of freeways that would tear through their communities. The San Francisco Freeway Revolt was a decade-long fight to keep freeway construction out of the heart of the city. It was a back-and-forth battle: the California Highway Commission continually proposed freeway plans, and the Board of Supervisors continually rejected them. The original plan was proposed in 1951 and was repeatedly revised until its final rejection in 1966. The San Francisco Freeway Revolt was the first of such movements to cause real reform and succeed in stopping government-funded freeway construction.² The revolt not only protected San Francisco's landscape, but reformed urban planning strategies to this day.

The revolt itself was a reaction to changes in government approach towards city design. In the early 20th century, urban planning was dominated by government backed "Master Planners" who wielded unchecked power

¹ Georgia McDonnell, "Freeways in S.F.," *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 1, 1956, Letters to the Editor, <https://www.newspapers.com/article/san-francisco-chronicle/185977082/>.

² Katherine M. Johnson, "Captain Blake versus the Highwaymen: Or, How San Francisco Won the Freeway Revolt," *Journal of Planning History* 8, no. 1 (2008): 56-74, pdf.

to reshape cities according to their modernist ideals.³ They sought to impose highway infrastructure, which would profoundly influence the daily lives of millions, with little consideration for local input.⁴ The San Francisco Freeway Revolt, was, fundamentally, a fight to re-insert citizen's voices into the planning process. San Franciscans held rallies, petitioned, wrote letters to newspapers, and attended meetings of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors.⁵ In doing so, they articulated new values about urbanism that would later shape a new urban planning paradigm. Through effectively organized grassroots resistance groups, the San Francisco Freeway Revolt directly undermined the authority of the Master Planner, sparking a nationwide revolution that led to a reformed planning paradigm grounded in environmentalism, community input, and neighborhood integrity.

The Master Planner Paradigm

Between 1900 and the 1960s, a paternalistic planning style embodied the zeitgeist of urban planning. Modernist urban leaders took on the role of the Master Planner, a self-appointed expert who drew large-scale blueprints dictating land use, transportation, housing, and economic activity. Originally, they did have a valid rationale. Ebenezer Howard's *The Garden Cities of To-morrow*, published in 1889, is widely regarded as the foundation of the suburban concept.⁶ Living in overcrowded, dirty, and loud London, his Garden City was a "design reaction to the physical decay and social inequities of industrial cities."⁷ Removed from this original context, however, the fundamental ideas of the Garden City that inspired future urban planners were city destroying rather than city building.⁸ For example, cities that were not rigidly structured according to zones of use were considered as "the summation of the haphazard, antagonistic whims of many self-centered, ill-advised individuals," meaning the residents themselves.⁹ Master Planners intentionally departed from millennia of dense, mixed use urban neighborhoods, viewing the chaotic city bustle as a problem. Confident in their approach and following a broader cultural trend of rapid modernization, they approached urban development from a strictly utilitarian and business oriented perspective.¹⁰ Rather than seeking inputs from local residents, they were frustrated with the public's reluctance to embrace modernity.¹¹ Among other things, they imposed highways and car-dependency into communities without citizens' consent, frequently uprooting the lives of entire communities and sparking backlash against their mega-projects.¹²

Coinciding with automobile adoption and white suburban flight, Master Planners adopted and promoted the idea of socially and politically distinct suburbs as a place to come home to, justifying highway construction as a way to efficiently connect commuter-suburbs to the city. This car-centric philosophy became institutionalized in the 1940s and 1950s, gaining hundreds of millions of dollars in federal support.¹³

³ Eric Avila, *The Folklore of the Freeway: Race and Revolt in the Modernist City*, *A Quadrant Book* (University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 17-52.

⁴ William Issel, "Land Values, Human Values, and the Preservation of the City's Treasured Appearance': Environmentalism, Politics, and the San Francisco Freeway Revolt," *Pacific Historical Review* 68, no. 4 (1999): <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4492372>; Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, vintage books ed. (1961; repr., New York: Random House, 1992), 3-25.

⁵ Issel, "Land Values," 629-633.

⁶ Ebenezer Howard, *Garden Cities of To-morrow* (M.I.T. Press, 1965); Jacobs, *The Death*, 18-25.

⁷ Jacobs, Allan, and Donald Appleyard. "Toward an Urban Design Manifesto." *Journal of the American Planning Association* 53, no. 1 (1987), 112-20.

⁸ Jacobs, *The Death*, 18-19.

⁹ Jacobs, *The Death*, 21.

¹⁰ Jacobs, *The Death*, 18-19.

¹¹ Jacobs, *The Death*, 18-19.

¹² "The Highway Fight That Changed Cities Forever." Video, 14:48. YouTube. Posted by City Beautiful, September 10, 2023. Accessed January 31, 2026. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nISU3uaaOUM>.

¹³ Colman, Steven B. "The Roads Not Taken. The San Francisco Freeway Revolt Revisited." Online presentation pdf, 24 pages. ITE Western District, undated (estim. ~2020), 8-9. <https://www.westernite.org/annualmeet>

San Francisco Freeway Revolt

In the 1950s, the highway-construction movement arrived in San Francisco, triggering a wave of reaction. Over time, the San Francisco Freeway Revolt evolved from an attempt to reform the proposals toward more revolutionary ideas regarding complete rejection of freeways. The Revolt was, at its core, a struggle between state highway authorities and grassroots opposition. Initially, the parties were hopelessly unequal. On one side were grassroots citizen organizations and local media who mobilized their elected representatives. They were equipped with local knowledge and deep emotional investment.¹⁴ On the opposing side, State highway Master Planners were equipped with government authority, vast financial resources, and the prevailing modern scientific thinking.¹⁵

State freeway engineers in Sacramento brought the first comprehensive highway plan for San Francisco in 1951. They proposed twenty-five miles of elevated freeways crisscrossing the city. The most relevant ones included the Embarcadero freeway along the waterfront, the Western Freeway through Golden Gate Park, and the Central freeway in between them. These north-south routes were to be linked by the east-west Panhandle Freeway (See Appendix A).¹⁶

The 1951 plan faced early resistance characterized by reform rather than revolt. As the San Francisco Planning Commission approved the plan and voted to expedite the construction of the Embarcadero Freeway, locals immediately began to raise their voices in protests.¹⁷ The San Francisco Arts Commission and the Planning and Housing Association both spoke out against the freeway, seeking alternate plans.¹⁸ The San Francisco Chronicle, which became a key actor in anti-freeway activism, published letters to the editor expressing citizens' concerns and fueling opposition. One such letter encouraged careful consideration of freeway placement: "The action taken now will influence the future growth, welfare and beauty of San Francisco for many years to come."¹⁹ At stake was the protection of a historic waterfront cherished by residents. However, the language of opposition was generally mild and constructive, seeking to minimize damage by rerouting the proposed plans. Most San Franciscans accepted the modernist paradigm that highways were essential. For example, the debate surrounding the Embarcadero Freeway focused on technical details of straight vs curved routing near the Ferry Building. The state chose straight, citing financial reasons but exposing their disregard of citizen perspectives. Construction of the freeway began in 1956.²⁰

The construction of the Embarcadero Freeway was a turning point in the revolt, ushering in a new era of organized resistance focused on the outright rejection of future freeway plans rather than their rerouting. The freeway's jarring elevated structure severed the historical eastern waterfront, becoming extremely unpopular, and thrusting the freeway controversy to the forefront of city politics (See Appendix B).²¹ Additionally, its construction coincided with the adoption of the federal Interstate and Defense Highway Act, which guaranteed hundreds of millions of dollars in funding to state highway engineers. It enabled the California Highway Commission to

ings/17_San_Diego/Presentations/9C-Colman.pdf

¹⁴ Issel, "Land Values," 617.

¹⁵ Issel, "Land Values," 623-624; Johnson, "Captain Blake."

¹⁶ Johnson, "Captain Blake," 61-62.

¹⁷ "Embarcadero Freeway Plans Set," *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 1953, 18, <https://www.newspapers.com/article/san-francisco-chronicle/189782258/>. Johnson, "Captain Blake," 61-62.

¹⁸ Johnson, "Captain Blake," 61.

¹⁹ Meyer, Fred, Hugh Keenan, Edith Jensen, and George Blackmer. "Embarcadero Freeway." *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 30, 1955, Letters to the Editor, 14. <https://www.newspapers.com/article/san-francisco-chronicle/188694880/>.

²⁰ Meyer, "Embarcadero," 14; Johnson, "Captain Blake," 61; Issel, "Land Values," 624.

²¹ "Embarcadero Freeway Gets Going-Over," *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 13, 1959, 29, <https://www.newspapers.com/article/san-francisco-chronicle/189786763/>; "The Mayor's Views: Ferry Freeway 'Regrettable,'" *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 16, 1959, 5, <https://www.newspapers.com/article/san-francisco-chronicle/189786545/>.

propose “the ultimate freeway and expressway system of the entire state,” a 12,500 mile network, including all 25 miles of the 1951 proposal.²² Alarmed, neighborhood organizations, business owners, individual citizens, and politicians came together to organize networks of opposition. In the Sunset district, real estate developer Christopher McKeon and Catholic priest Father Harold Collins founded the Property Owners’ Association of San Francisco, an ardent anti-freeway organization that enlisted tens of thousands of supporters. Their rallies filled auditoriums and transformed Board of Supervisors meetings into packed forums of protest (See Appendix C). It was under the leadership of people like McKeon, Collins, and chairman of the Board’s Committee on Streets William Blake that opposition became tangible and organized.²³ Letters to the Chronicle captured the mounting anger: “All San Franciscans opposed to any further construction of freeways must fight this monster.. Our city is not just a place to make money, but also a place to live, a liveable and loveable place, a city of beauty and charm?”²⁴ The goal had shifted from reform to rejection.²⁵ Citizens sought to reclaim local control and rejected the state’s paternalistic methods. They argued that elevated highways could not fit with San Francisco’s geography, aesthetics, or culture. While some San Franciscans, such as downtown businessmen, supported the highways as a way for employees and customers to get in and out efficiently, their voices were overshadowed.²⁶ By 1959, as the highway commission toured the plan for approval, opposition in San Francisco was at a peak. After two days of difficult meetings, on January 23, 1959, the Board of Supervisors voted to cancel the entire freeway plan, quoting “a petition containing between 8,500 and 10,000 signatures of residents”, and forfeiting some 337 million dollars of federal funding.²⁷ Now, reform had become a revolt!

While the struggle continued for another seven years, involving countless freeway iterations, San Franciscans remained committed to environmentalism, and pride in their city’s uniqueness. Amidst the growing anti-establishment attitudes of the 1960s, the Freeway Revolt gained traction right along with the fight for civil and gay rights and Vietnam War protests.²⁸ In 1961, protesters successfully opposed a simplified plan that included only the Western and Golden Gate freeways by picketing outside city hall.²⁹ In 1964, renewed resistance defeated a “beautified” Panhandle Freeway cutting through predominantly Black communities.³⁰ Protesters gathered in Panhandle Park and held a rally, where singer Melvina Reynolds performed “Cement Octopus,” a protest song written specifically for this effort.³¹ In 1965, federal officials imposed a deadline: unless a plan was approved within the next five months, they would pull funding.³² Citizens stood strong in their opposition, shocking federal officials:

²² Johnson, “Captain Blake,” 62-63.

²³ Colman, “The Roads Not Taken,” 15; Issel, “Land Values,” 629-633.

²⁴ Methner, F., James Carolyn, John Lane, and George Friend. “Freeways in S.F.” *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 20, 1958, Letters to the Editor, 28. <https://www.newspapers.com/article/san-francisco-chronicle/185969800/>.

²⁵ “Down with Embarcadero’ - Shelley on Freeway Plan,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 14, 1965, 3, <https://www.newspapers.com/article/san-francisco-chronicle/185978957/>.

²⁶ L.S. Freeman et al., “Embarcadero Freeway,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 3, 1959, Letters to the Editor, 38, <https://www.newspapers.com/article/san-francisco-chronicle/185979634/>; Johnson, “Captain Blake,” 57.

²⁷ Colman, “The Roads Not Taken,” 17; Johnson, “Captain Blake,” 63; *Journal of Proceedings Board of Supervisors* 54, no. 4 (1959). <https://archive.org/details/journalofproceed54sanfrich/page/n45/mode/2up>.

²⁸ Fred Frommer, “1960s Counterculture,” Britannica, accessed April 8, 2026, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/1960s-counterculture>.

²⁹ Chris Carlsson, “The Freeway Revolt,” FoundSF, accessed January 31, 2026, https://www.foundsf.org/The_Freeway_Revolt.

³⁰ Issel, “Land Values,” 632-633; Colman, “The Roads Not Taken,” 18.

³¹ Carlsson, “The Freeway,” FoundSF; Donovan Bess, “Thousands Shout ‘No’ to Freeway,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 18, 1964, 1-11, <https://www.newspapers.com/article/san-francisco-chronicle/189787354/>.

³² Johnson, “Captain Blake,” 71-74.

“What perturbs the ‘experts’ is what to do with the money nobody wants.”³³ Highway engineers could normally use funding as pressure on city officials, but San Franciscans prioritized maintaining the city’s character.³⁴ Finally, on March 21, 1966, the Board of Supervisors took the historical vote to reject the state plan for the sixth and last time, forfeiting 270 million dollars of funding.³⁵

A New Paradigm

During the San Francisco Revolt, residents were laying the foundations for a new urban planning paradigm, promoting ideals like environmentalism and a democratic planning process that were considered revolutionary at the time. Environmental beauty - absent from the Master Planner’s vocabulary - was among residents’ most persistent concern.³⁶ Soon after the Embarcadero Freeway was constructed, residents wrote to the *San Francisco Chronicle* lamenting that the scenic Embarcadero waterfront “had unmatched possibilities until the freeway blight was imposed,” or that the trees along Portola drive “took 40 years to grow but the Division of Highways took only seconds to destroy them.”³⁷ The spirit of radical modernism that governed urban planning prioritized functionality with little regard for natural beauty.³⁸ Today, eligible voters can vote on the construction and placement of public works projects such as freeways through propositions.³⁹ During the Freeway Revolts, citizens did not yet have that right, and fought to emphasize the importance of “total community planning,” which would take into consideration the real local conditions.⁴⁰ They challenged the idea that unelected officials could impose irreversible changes without local input. Community participation became one of the core tenets of the new paradigm that would eventually make voting on public works projects possible.

San Francisco residents also challenged many of the assumptions held by Master Planners about a car-centric American future. As they rejected urban freeways, citizens turned to public transit as an alternative: “San Francisco will have to come to terms with a rapid transit system that will keep cars away...Individual auto travel for a huge and growing Bay Area population is insupportable in a limited area of 45 square miles.”⁴¹ They were challenging the notion that the automobile was inevitable, arguing instead that no single solution fit every city.⁴² San Francisco’s particularly hilly and dense nature made the options for freeway construction much more limited.⁴³ A core tenet of the modernist planner’s argument for freeways was that they would displace what they called *urban blight*, usually poor communities of color.⁴⁴ Residents argued instead that freeways would produce more slums than they could clear. When citizen activist John Lane described the area under the Central Freeway he depicted a dirty and toxic area with “deafening” noise: “In no time there will be the makings of the best slum you ever saw.”⁴⁵ The idea that

³³ W.M. Sherlock, “Freeways in S.F.,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 20, 1956, Letters to the Editor, <https://www.newspapers.com/article/san-francisco-chronicle/185986407/>.

³⁴ Johnson, “Captain Blake,” 75.

³⁵ “Both Freeway Plans Rejected by Board,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 22, 1966, 1-14, <https://www.newspapers.com/article/san-francisco-chronicle/185970994/>; Johnson, “Captain Blake,” 73-74.

³⁶ Issel, “Land Values,” 611-618.

³⁷ Methner, “Freeways,” 28; Freeman et al., “Embarcadero Freeway,” Letters to the Editor, 38.

³⁸ Jacobs, *The Death*, 17-25.

³⁹ “Initiatives and Ballot Propositions,” State of California Department of Finance, last modified November 2002, accessed February 10, 2026, <https://dof.ca.gov/budget/initiatives-and-ballot-propositions/>.

⁴⁰ “The Opportunity Facing Planners,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 11, 1959, <https://www.newspapers.com/article/san-francisco-chronicle/185969141/>.

⁴¹ John Lane, “Freeways in S.F.,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 11, 1959, Letters to the Editor, 40, <https://www.newspapers.com/article/san-francisco-chronicle/185969101/>.

⁴² “The Opportunity,” 40.

⁴³ Issel, “Land Values,” 632.

⁴⁴ Jacobs, *The Death*, 1-6; “The Highway,” video.

⁴⁵ Lane, “Freeways in S.F.,” Letters to the Editor, 40.

freeways and their surroundings were inhospitable spaces was not yet accepted by proponents. San Franciscans saw firsthand the effects of freeways on their neighborhoods.

While the San Francisco grassroots opposition groups expressed the foundations of a new planning approach, the intellectual synthesis was most clearly articulated by a New York-based thinker Jane Jacobs in her 1961 book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*.⁴⁶ Jacobs preached many of the same values that were espoused by San Franciscans: environmentalism, pedestrian life, and mixed-use neighborhoods. She also repeatedly praises San Francisco neighborhoods for their density and beauty and references the events in San Francisco in her writing.⁴⁷ Throughout her career, Jacobs criticized prominent Master Planners like Robert Moses in his campaign for the Lower Manhattan Expressway.⁴⁸ Together, these ideas marked the emergence of a new paradigm that re-centered cities around people rather than infrastructure.

Long-Term Impact

The Revolt has had a lasting effect on San Francisco. No major freeway construction has taken place in the city since the 1960s. Despite it, San Francisco has continued to grow into a modern city with a vibrant economy and many desirable neighborhoods. The Panhandle Park and the trees on Portola Street are still there. As protesters imagined, the Bay Area Rapid Transit system launched in 1974, becoming a transportation backbone connecting the city to the suburbs. After several proposals to tear down the Embarcadero Freeway, the Loma Prieta earthquake devastated the unpopular structure in 1989, opening the door to its demolition and a redevelopment of the waterfront, now one of the most pleasant areas in the city.

More broadly, the San Francisco Freeway Revolt served as inspiration for other freeway revolts.⁴⁹ In June of 1966, opponents of the Riverfront Expressway in New Orleans, which would displace thousands of low-income residents, delayed the construction and eventually canceled it in 1969. Baltimore and Boston re-evaluated and canceled their freeway proposals soon thereafter. San Francisco's willingness to forfeit hundreds of millions of dollars in funding changed the political equation in Washington D.C.. In 1966, the Congress added two new transportation bills that gave federal highway officials the power to veto any plan that did not show "maximum effort" or consider "all feasible and prudent alternatives" to the disruption of parkland and historic sites. By 1970, President Richard Nixon signed the National Environmental Policy Act, necessitating environmental review for all federally funded projects, including highways.⁵⁰

Conclusion

As Thomas Kuhn argued in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, a dominant "paradigm" is not overturned simply by criticism and evidence of its failures. Paradigms fall only when a viable alternative emerges.⁵¹ Ultimately, the San Francisco Freeway Revolt introduced a new planning paradigm with opposite values to the radical modernists: emphasis on pedestrians, mixed use, denser neighborhoods, and most importantly, citizen participation.⁵² These values still govern contemporary urban design today. Because of the long-lasting nature of the built environment, ideological change takes a long time to appear in the real world. Urban planners today are still working to cement the values held by San Franciscans as early as the 1950s into contemporary infrastructure. The revolution continues.

⁴⁶ Jacobs, *The Death*.

⁴⁷ Jacobs, *The Death*, 5.

⁴⁸ "The Highway," video.

⁴⁹ Avila, *The Folklore*, 31.

⁵⁰ Avila, *The Folklore*, 30; Johnson, "Captain Blake," 75.

⁵¹ Kuhn, Thomas S. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. 2nd, Enlarged ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970, 66-76.

⁵² Jacobs and Appleyard, "Toward an Urban," 112-120.

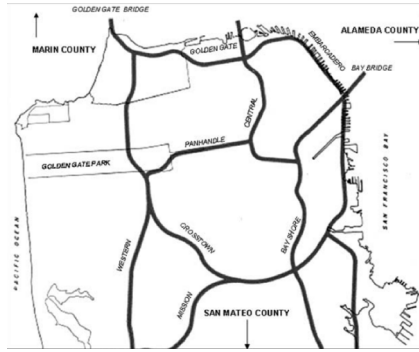


Figure 1. Portrayed is the 1958 version of the San Francisco freeway master plan. Proposed freeways would crisscross the city through densely populated areas, waterfronts and parks. Source: Katherine M. Johnson, “State Freeway Plan Proposed 1958,” map, 2009.



Figure 2. An aerial picture of the double-decker Embarcadero Freeway structure separating downtown San Francisco from the historical Ferry Building and waterfront. Its completion in 1959 marked a turning point in the Freeway Revolt, expanding and radicalizing popular resistance to highway construction. Source: *Ferry Building and Embarcadero Freeway*, photograph, February 6, 1982.



Figure 3. Freeway protesters attending a Board of Supervisors meeting at City Hall in 1966. Attending local government meetings was a common form of protest at the height of the revolt. Source: *Freeway Protestors in City Hall, 1966*, photograph.

“WE ARE RISING”: BLACK AMERICAN CLASSICISTS AND THE LATE 19TH CENTURY REVOLUTION IN GRECO-ROMAN STUDY

SHREYAS KARNAM

When I heard about this year’s theme, I was particularly enamored with the idea of reform. My mind jumped to a fascinating exhibit I had seen last year: Michele Valerie Ronnick’s “Twelve Black Classicists,” a mosaic with photos and short biographies of early 20th-century Black Classics professors and Latin teachers. What struck me when I first encountered the exhibit was that I recognized none of the names. Not one. Yet many of their achievements seemed to me to be active efforts to reform a field that did not welcome them initially.

I then read several secondary sources — Eric Hairston’s book *The Ebony Column* was particularly illustrative in understanding Black authors’ incorporation of classical themes, and Margaret Malamud’s *African Americans and the Classics* provided helpful biographical information and added to my contextual understanding. At the same time, as I plumbed the essays and writings of the classicists themselves, especially those of W.S. Scarborough and Helen Chesnutt, I was struck by how progressive their ideas were. While I knew about W.E.B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington’s famous debate about Black education, I realized that Black classicists had discussed the tension between industrial training and liberal arts education much earlier, and without the same recognition.

Meanwhile, the most instructive primary sources for this paper were the Latin and Greek textbooks these scholars authored. I recognized their modern approach to language pedagogy, especially in contrast to the rote memorization popular in Classics at the time. And in the reactions of critics and Black scholars’ responses, it was clear to me that these reforms constituted an academic revolution within Classics. It was also especially interesting to research Helen Chesnutt’s life, as very little has been written about her; I also transcribed several letters from her to Langston Hughes, many of which are sitting in Yale’s Beinecke Library archives but have not yet received any scholarly attention, to my knowledge.

The second phase of my research considered Black scholars’ use of Classics to argue for abolition and racial equality. Most interesting to me were Black activists’ reactions to Jefferson’s racist *Notes on the State of Virginia*, and their subsequent push to globalize antiquity to include Egypt and Carthage, two ancient African civilizations. That was revolutionary, too: in rebuking racism, Black scholars expanded the boundaries of the field itself.

And a little selfishly, I found some of the primary source writings especially relatable, which made this project intellectually stimulating. Latin has been my favorite subject since I was eleven. Yet I have always been compelled to justify its relevance, both to myself and to others. Black classicists considered these questions a century ago. Ronnick rediscovered many of these scholars in the 1990s. By then, Howard University was the only HBCU that still offered a Classics degree. Its program, too, was removed in 2021. But it is my hope that, with this paper, these revolutionary classicists receive more of the recognition they deserve — for reforming the field and using the field to reform the country.

Alexander Crummell was listening at the door. His employer, the abolitionist Elizur Wright, for whom he had been working as delivery boy, had just welcomed two lawyers from Washington, D.C. These men were recounting a particularly memorable dinner with the then-Vice President John C. Calhoun, who had declared at the table that “if he could find a Negro who knew the Greek syntax, he would then believe that the Negro was a human being

and should be treated as a man.”¹ A free person of color, Crummell was stunned.² He went on to study ancient Greek at Queens College, Cambridge, from 1846 to 1853.³

Time and time again after Crummell’s fateful instance of eavesdropping, Black scholars have answered Calhoun’s invocation, forming a little-known portion of W.E.B. Du Bois’ so-called “Talented Tenth.” Theirs was a double duty: to convince white classicists that they belonged, and to defend Classics against utilitarian naysayers. And most difficult of all: to justify the field to themselves, to explain their paradoxically becoming closer to the very Western civilization that had oppressed them.⁴ Turn-of-the century Black classicists responded by reforming Classics from within — to be more accessible to college students, more contemporary in its pedagogy, and more global in its reception. The academic revolution that they led within American Latin and Greek classrooms fueled broader racial reform.

Classics’ Tumultuous Place in White Schools

As core subjects required for the admissions exams favored by Harvard, Yale, and other colleges, Latin and Greek dominated early American education.⁵ However, Classics was not without controversy. As early as 1766, a character in the novel *The Vicar of Wakefield* opines that he does not see “any good” in Classics, for he has “ten thousand florins a year without Greek” and “eat[s] heartily without Greek.”⁶ Satire or not, the comment points to the larger, acrimonious debate about Classics’ utility that spilled over into American upper-class society by the early republican period.⁷ As New Jersey governor William Livingston put it, ancient literature would not “remove our oaks” nor would “a taste for the *Georgics* cultivate our lands.”⁸ Moreover, rising pro-English sentiments and the increasing accessibility of English translations made some see the original ancient languages as unnecessary.⁹ And as the common school movement began in 1830, educational reformers dismissed the doctrine of Latin for all as impractical.¹⁰ By 1866, Harvard had removed Greek as an entrance requirement.¹¹ But Classics had its stalwart defenders. Thomas Jefferson declared in an 1819 letter that “the classical languages are a solid basis for most, and an

¹ Wilson Jeremiah Moses, *Alexander Crummell: A Study of Civilization and Discontent* (Oxford University Press, USA, 1989), 20, <https://www.proquest.com/legacydocview/EBC/431133?accountid=618>.

² Alexander Crummell, “The Attitude of the American Mind Toward the Negro Intellect,” speech, December 28, 1897, BlackPast, last modified January 29, 2007, accessed January 6, 2026, <https://blackpast.org/african-american-history/1898-alexander-crummell-attitude-american-mind-toward-negro-intellect>

³ Michele Valerie Ronnick, “Twelve Black Classicists,” *Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics*, 3rd ser., 11, no. 3 (2004): 86, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/20163940.pdf>.

⁴ Margaret Malamud, *African Americans and the Classics Antiquity, Abolition and Activism* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016), 18, digital file.

⁵ Clara J. Bates, “Where the Yard Meets the Street,” *The Harvard Crimson*, September 26, 2019, accessed January 27, 2026, <https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2019/9/26/where-yard-meets-street/>.

⁶ Oliver Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield* (London: R. Collins, 1766), 93, accessed January 27, 2026, <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/2667>.

⁷ Ronnick, “Twelve Black,” 85-86.

⁸ William Livingston to John Lord Bishop of Landaff, “A Letter to the Right Reverend Father in God, John, Lord Bishop of Landaff; Occasioned by Some Passages in His Lordship’s Sermon, on the 20th of February, 1767, in Which the American Colonies Are Loaded with Great and Undeserved Reproach,” February 20, 1767, accessed January 27, 2026, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=evans;cc=evans;rgn=-main;view=text;idno=N08561.0001.001>.

⁹ Siobhan Moroney, “Latin, Greek and the American Schoolboy: Ancient Languages and Class Determinism in the Early Republic,” *The Classical Journal* 96, no. 3 (2001): 300, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3298326>.

¹⁰ Moroney, 295-96.

¹¹ Bates, “Where the Yard.”

ornament to all the sciences.”¹² Nevertheless, by the Civil War, American education had undergone a revolution in which Classics’ place in the pantheon of academia had diminished.

Antebellum Black Classicists

The participants of this conversation were educated men, all of whom were white, many of whom had claimed the Classics as their property as patriots.¹³ But what of the demographic groups that classical studies excluded — Black Americans, chief among them? Before the Civil War, Black classicists were exceedingly rare. In his 1748 essay *Of Natural Characters*, David Hume mocks an educated Black man in Jamaica as a “parrot” whose speech is unintelligible.¹⁴ He does not use the man’s name. It was Francis Williams, chiefly known for his ability to compose lengthy poems in Latin, then the greatest mark of an educated man.¹⁵ Perhaps a reaction to smear-jobs by contemporaneous biographers, Williams’ portrait (Appendix A) shows its subject reading Samuel Johnson’s dictionary; although early art historians dismissed it as a caricature, it was actually the first self-presentation of a Black man as an intellectual in Western art.¹⁶ Meanwhile, in the United States, Phyllis Wheatley studied Ovid and Terence while enslaved.¹⁷ Her later poetry mirrored classical models, challenging White beliefs that slaves could not comprehend these modes.¹⁸

A Revolution Within the Field’s Demographics

However, the conclusion of the Civil War allowed Black people to access Greek and Latin in far greater numbers.¹⁹ Black schools adopted the classical curriculum of New England, and classical references began to pervade Black writing and rhetoric, not in an effort to imitate white culture but to incorporate the intellectual language of the period.²⁰ However, the period also saw debates emerge over Black education, over what Samuel Barrows called in 1891 two “aristocracies,” that of culture and that of wealth.²¹ The disagreement might be summed up by the ancient Greek *τεχνη* (*techne*, or industrial education), versus *παιδεία* (*paideia*, learning for intellectual enrichment and equality). The two sides reached their apotheoses in the early 1900s in Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois.²² However, the tension between industrial education and the liberal arts predated these famous men. Black classicists hotly contested the issue. And in the spirit of reform, they questioned why these two paths had to be

¹² Thomas Jefferson to John Brazer, August 24, 1819, accessed January 27, 2026, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/03-14-02-0591>.

¹³ Moroney, “Latin, Greek,” 298.

¹⁴ David Hume, “Of Natural Characters,” Hume Texts Online, accessed January 27, 2026, <https://davidhume.org/texts/empl1/nc>.

¹⁵ Fara Dabhoiwala, “A Man of Parts and Learning,” *London Review of Books*, last modified November 21, 2024, accessed January 28, 2026, <https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v46/n22/fara-dabhoiwala/a-man-of-parts-and-learning>.

¹⁶ Dabhoiwala.

¹⁷ Eric Ashley Hairston, *The Ebony Column Classics, Civilization, and the African American Reclamation of the West* (University of Tennessee Press, 2016), 26, <https://www.proquest.com/legacydocview/EBC/1215889?accountid=618>.

¹⁸ Hairston, 25.

¹⁹ Ronnick, “Twelve Black,” 86.

²⁰ Michele Valerie Ronnick, “Vergil in the Black American Experience,” in *A Companion to Vergil’s Aeneid and Its Tradition*, by Joseph Farrell and Michael C. J. Putnam (Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 380, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/harker-ebooks/detail.action?docID=514428>

²¹ Samuel J. Barrows, “What the Southern Negro Is Doing for Himself,” *The Atlantic Monthly*, June 1891, accessed January 28, 2026, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1891/06/what-the-southern-negro-is-doing-for-himself/526212/>.

²² Ronnick, “Twelve Black,” 86-87.

mutually exclusive at all.²³ Despite the widespread popularity of Washington's Hampton-Tuskegee model of manual training, many Black colleges continued to defend liberal arts.²⁴ In large part, Black classicists led this effort as they tried to reform Classics, undeterred by (and perhaps in a reaction to) critics who recoiled to see former slaves enjoying classical texts.²⁵

Scarborough and Reform in Higher Education

Du Bois' most direct antecedent can be found in William Sanders Scarborough, widely considered one of the first Black classicists.²⁶ Born into slavery in 1852, Scarborough secretly taught himself to read and write.²⁷ He attended Atlanta University literally in a class of his own, acutely aware that he was "studying on behalf of his entire race."²⁸ After obtaining further graduate degrees, Scarborough turned his attention to the publication of a Greek textbook.²⁹ It was his *magnum opus*, the feat that his 1926 *The New York Times* obituary suggests made him "one of the greatest colored educators" in the U.S.³⁰ When *First Lessons in Greek* was published in 1881, it was a revolutionary rebuttal to Calhoun's declaration decades earlier: here was a Black man who had not only learned the Greek syntax but had mastered it and endeavored to make it accessible to others. Indeed, in the preface to the text, Scarborough humbly thanks the authors of Greek textbooks before him, but he also states that his aim is a reformist, revisionary one — to "simplify" the convoluted methods of earlier texts.³¹ Within the text itself, the repetition with which Scarborough presents grammatical concepts, new for his time, is strikingly close to modern language pedagogy.³² In a direct appeal to students who came from a rural background like his, he regularly highlights concrete, agrarian vocabulary that these students would be familiar with.³³ Moreover, in the introduction to *First Lessons*, Scarborough asks that the textbook be judged on merit alone.³⁴ In this sense, he seems to anticipate and implicitly respond to racially-motivated reactions to his work. Reviewers praised the innovation of *First Les-*

²³ Ronnick, 87; John Wesley Edward Bowen, "An Apology for the Higher Education of the Negro," *The Methodist Review* 13, no. 5 (1897): 723, accessed January 30, 2026, <https://www.bu.edu/classics/files/2021/07/Bowen-MethodistRev-1.pdf>.

²⁴ Ronnick, "Vergil in the Black," 380-81.

²⁵ Ronnick, "Twelve Black," 87; Horace Mann Bond, *The Education of the Negro in the American Social Order* (1934; repr., New York: Octagon Books, 1966), 382, accessed February 4, 2026, <https://archive.org/details/educationofnegro0000bond/page/362/mode/2up>.

²⁶ Henry Louis Gates, Jr., foreword to *The Works of William Sanders Scarborough: Black Classicist and Race Leader*, by William Sanders Scarborough, ed. Michele Valerie Ronnick (Oxford University Press, 2006), xviii, ProQuest Ebook Central.

²⁷ Francis P. Weisenburger, "William Sanders Scarborough: Early Life and Years at Wilberforce," *Ohio History Journal* 71 (1962): 204-05, accessed January 2, 2026, <https://resources.ohiohistory.org/ohj/search/display.php?page=70&cipp=20&searchterm=array&vol=71&pages=203-226,287-289>.

²⁸ Michele Valerie Ronnick, introduction to *The Works of William Sanders Scarborough: Black Classicist and Race Leader*, by William Sanders Scarborough, ed. Michele Valerie Ronnick (Oxford University Press, 2006), xiii-xxiii, ProQuest Ebook Central.

²⁹ Ronnick, xxiii-iv.

³⁰ "Dr. William Scarborough: Noted Negro Educator Dies in Wilberforce, Ohio at the Age of 79," *The New York Times*, September 12, 1926, 29, accessed January 24, 2026, <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1926/09/12/issue.html>.

³¹ W. S. Scarborough, *William Sanders Scarborough's First Lessons in Greek: a Facsimile of the 1881 First Edition*, ed. Ward W. Briggs, et al. (Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, 2018), iii-iv, accessed January 2, 2026, https://www.google.com/books/edition/_/kQOQDwAAQBAJ?hl=en&newbks=1.

³² *The Classical Outlook* 94, no. 3 (2019): 163, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26865144>.

³³ *The Classical Outlook*, 163.

³⁴ Scarborough, *First Lessons*, iii.

sons.³⁵ Even more impressive than its netting a major publisher — A.S. Barnes and Company — was its adoption by a number of white schools.³⁶

Scarborough also wrote prolifically, perhaps achieving what Cicero posited as the definition of freedom: “the power of living as you wish.”³⁷ He dissected Greek phonology, Vergil’s *Eclogues*, and Alcibiades.³⁸ He defended the classical languages from arguments that they were useless, affirming that they instilled intellectual discipline.³⁹ This argument for the Black pursuit of Classics came in 1883, before Washington and Du Bois debated the issue. And in an address summarized by the *Atlanta Constitution* in 1914, he more directly probed the tension between economic stability and intellectual equality.⁴⁰ Scarborough contended that there was indeed a “great need” for industrial education but simultaneously argued that “learning and labor travel hand in hand,” positing a liberal arts education as the path to intellectual respect even if it existed within the sphere of white academia.⁴¹ That was a revolutionary idea. For Scarborough had attempted to erase the dichotomy of choice that loomed over Black professional life; to him, both industrial and classical education belonged to the same coin. Here was an argument for Classics’ relevance.

Responding to White Reactions

Unsurprisingly, some of Scarborough’s ideas faced sour reactions from his white colleagues. As a member of the Modern Language Association (its first Black member), he attempted to attend an 1896 conference at Case Western Reserve University but was refused accommodation at every hotel in the area; it was a humiliating experience.⁴² In 1909, by which time Scarborough was the president of Wilberforce University, he was disinvited from the banquet of the conference of the American Philological Association; in response, he chose to boycott the entire event.⁴³ At the time of that bold reaction, Scarborough was the most famous — but certainly not the only — member of a growing minority of Black Classics professors.⁴⁴ Regardless, the same debate that had raged among White intellectuals about Classics’ utility found its way to Black scholars by the turn of the 20th century.⁴⁵ In a familiar appeal, A.A. Whitman lambasted Greco-Roman study as an otiose pursuit inferior to the cultivation of crops and

³⁵ Ronnick, introduction, xxiv.

³⁶ *The Classical Outlook*, 162–63.

³⁷ Marcus Tullius Cicero, “Paradoxa Stoicorum” [Stoic Paradoxes], The Latin Library, accessed February 1, 2026, <https://www.thelatinlibrary.com/cicero/paradoxa.shtml#5>.

³⁸ Ronnick, introduction, vi; William Sanders Scarborough, “Notes on Andocides and the Authorship of the Oration against Alcibiades,” *Proceedings of the Thirty-Fifth Annual Meeting of the American Philological Association Held at New Haven, Conn., July, 1903 Also of the Fourth Annual Meeting of the Philological Association of the Pacific Coast Held at San Francisco, Cal., Dec., 1902*, xli.

³⁹ William Sanders Scarborough, “The Utility of Studying the Greek, Part 1,” in *The Works of William Sanders Scarborough: Black Classicist and Race Leader*, by William Sanders Scarborough, ed. Michele Valerie Ronnick (Oxford University Press, 2006), 161–63, ProQuest Ebook Central.

⁴⁰ “DESCRIBES MISSION of EDUCATED NEGRO: PROF. W. S. SCARBROUGH EMPHASIZES NECESSITY of INDUSTRIAL TRAINING,” *The Atlanta Constitution* (1881–1945) (Atlanta, Ga.), February 5, 1914, <https://harker.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/describes-mission-educated-negro/docview/496708510/se-2?accountid=618>.

⁴¹ “DESCRIBES MISSION.”

⁴² Steven Mailloux, “Thinking with Rhetorical Figures: Performing Racial and Disciplinary Identities in Late-Nineteenth-Century America,” *American Literary History* 18, no. 4 (2006): 695, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4123618>.

⁴³ Shelley P. Haley and Sheila (Bridget) Murnaghan, “Race, Recovery, and Hope,” *TAPA* 152, no. 2 (2022).

⁴⁴ Ronnick, “Twelve Black,” 96.

⁴⁵ Ronnick, “Vergil in the Black,” 381.

the tilling of soil.⁴⁶ However, George Rowe took a view that demonstrated Black scholars' success in reforming Classics to more widely promote the discipline:

"Within the class-room in his place,
Greek, Latin, criticism,
To raise the youthful of his race
And show the world we're rising!"⁴⁷

Reforming High School Pedagogy

Beyond working to make classical studies more accessible, Black scholars reformed the way Classics was taught. By the early 20th century, secondary school teachers took up this charge. Particularly influential among these instructors was Helen Maria Chesnutt, who in 1932 authored a Latin textbook, *The Road to Latin*, with two white teachers.⁴⁸ The textbook's "Note to the Pupil" explains to students the importance of studying Latin in spite of its utilitarian detractors, of particular importance in the industrial setting of Cleveland, where Chesnutt taught; and it emphasizes that the skills that Latin imparted — cogent thinking and logical writing — would be invaluable to "all sorts of people who are anxious to get the most out of life."⁴⁹ Like Scarborough, Chesnutt rejected the idea that economic independence and classical learning had to be mutually exclusive. The textbook's pages are also decorated with illustrations of ancient women writers, more than one might expect.⁵⁰ Moreover, the first chapter tells the fictional story of an American school, making the content more relatable to Chesnutt's students.⁵¹ Early reviews for *The Road to Latin* praised this progressive approach, a far cry from the rote grammatical study popular at the time.⁵² One particularly effusive reviewer rhapsodized that Chesnutt ought to receive an honorary degree in Roman engineering for her efforts.⁵³

⁴⁶ A. A. Whitman, "An Educational Sermon on the Needs of the Negro," in *Afro-American Encyclopaedia; Or, the Thoughts, Doings, and Sayings of the Race, Embracing Lectures, Biographical Sketches, Sermons, Poems, Names of Universities, Colleges, Seminaries, Newspapers, Books, and a History of the Denominations, Giving the Numerical Strength of Each. In Fact, it Teaches Every Subject of Interest to the Colored People, as Discussed by More Than One Hundred of Their Wisest and Best Men and Women.*, ed. James T. Haley (1895), 453, accessed January 16, 2026, <https://docsouth.unc.edu/church/haley/haley.html>.

⁴⁷ George C. Rowe, "We Are Rising," in *Afro-American Encyclopaedia; Or, the Thoughts, Doings, and Sayings of the Race, Embracing Lectures, Biographical Sketches, Sermons, Poems, Names of Universities, Colleges, Seminaries, Newspapers, Books, and a History of the Denominations, Giving the Numerical Strength of Each. In Fact, it Teaches Every Subject of Interest to the Colored People, as Discussed by More Than One Hundred of Their Wisest and Best Men and Women.*, ed. James T. Haley (1895), 552, accessed January 16, 2026, <https://docsouth.unc.edu/church/haley/haley.html>.

⁴⁸ Haley and Sheila (Bridget) Murnaghan, "Race, Recovery."

⁴⁹ Helen Maria Chesnutt et al., *The Road to Latin*, ed. E.B. de Sauze (Philadelphia: John C. Winston Company, 1932), xv, accessed January 22, 2026, <https://books.google.com/books?id=nHcNAQAIAAJ&pg=PR1#v=onepage&q&f=false>.

⁵⁰ Michele Valerie Ronnick, "In Search of Helen Maria Chesnutt (1880-1969), Black Latinist," *New England Classical Journal* 48, no. 1 (2021): 8, accessed January 2, 2026, <https://crossworks.holycross.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1357&context=necj>.

⁵¹ Chesnutt et al., *The Road*, 7.

⁵² White, Dorrance S. *The Classical Journal* 28, no. 7 (1933), 541-42 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3290343>; Mitchell, B. W. *The Classical Weekly* 29, no. 24 (1936): 188-89; <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4339736?seq=1>; Mark E. Hutchinson, "Some Needed Research in the Teaching of Latin," *The Classical Journal* 29, no. 5 (1934): 350, <http://www.jstor.org/harker.idm.oclc.org/stable/3290158>.

⁵³ *The Journal of Education* 116, no. 6 (1933): 152, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42848992>.

Such was the dedication Chesnutt showed to making antiquity come alive for her pupils. When her curious students noticed the Roman *fascēs* (a bundle of axes) on the back face of the dime, she encouraged them to make their own *fascēs*-themed pins; the students shipped over 200 miniature pins to the meeting of the Ohio Latin Conference.⁵⁴ One junior high student asked her, “How long does a fellow have to take Latin before he can wear one of those things?”⁵⁵ And in a 1931 essay, Chesnutt described Central High School’s production of *Dido, The Phoenician Queen* for the bimillennial anniversary of Vergil’s birth, pointing out that she gave a Black student the “beautiful ebony” role of Iarbas, an African prince in the *Aeneid*.⁵⁶ The play was an inspirational success for her students, reflected Chesnutt, since

“[T]he pupils of this cosmopolitan high school ... in a neighborhood where the guns of gangsters can be heard roaring day and night ... were made to feel that poetry and music and art were precious and that human aspiration was indeed worthwhile.”⁵⁷

Chesnutt also was Langston Hughes’ Latin teacher at Central High. The pair corresponded throughout his career, and she advocated for his writing with other authors and commented on his unpublished poems — once her student, always (see transcriptions in Appendix B).

Globalizing Antiquity for Racial Reform

As scholars worked to reform educational institutions, a second, more radical revolution was simultaneously happening in Classics that affected the world outside it: activists were challenging the idea that antiquity had to be limited to Greece and Rome at all. The movement can be viewed as a reaction to Thomas Jefferson, who found in Classics an instrument to justify Black inferiority. In his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, he lauds the achievements of the ancient enslaved authors Epictetus, Phaedrus, and Terence.⁵⁸ But if slaves of antiquity could be educated and successful, how were literate Black slaves and freedmen any different? Jefferson introduces an anachronism to resolve this contradiction: in his view, ancient slaves belonged to the “race of whites.”⁵⁹ thus not disparaging the institution of slavery but purported biological deficiencies in the Black race.⁶⁰ However, in response to White slaveowners co-opting Classics, Black activists appropriated the field to advocate for abolitionist reform. In a direct reaction to Jefferson’s argument, in a 1829 essay David Walker praises the African Hannibal, who defeated the Romans several times, as the “greatest general of antiquity.”⁶¹ Using Jefferson’s logic, Walker sends Classics marching into proverbial battle. He portrayed the Greeks as savages rather than heroic role models, for in his view they too were White, the ancestors of slave owners.⁶²

Activists like Walker shared a secondary goal: to showcase the achievements of ancient African civilizations, with whom they posited a racial connection, to rebuke claims of African biological inferiority; more radically, these scholars suggested that Black education would resurrect the golden age of ancient Africa.⁶³ Thus, defining the exact

⁵⁴ Chesnutt, 305-06.

⁵⁵ Chesnutt, 305.

⁵⁶ Helen M. Chesnutt, “Ecce Vergilius!,” *The Classical Journal* 26, no. 4 (1931): 274.

⁵⁷ Chesnutt, 278.

⁵⁸ Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (London, 1785), 149, accessed January 31, 2026, <https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/service/gdc/lhbc/04902/04902.pdf>.

⁵⁹ Jefferson, 149.

⁶⁰ Jefferson, 149.

⁶¹ David Walker, *Walker’s Appeal, in Four Articles; Together with a Preamble, to the Coloured Citizens of the World, but in Particular, and Very Expressly, to Those of the United States of America* (Boston, 1830), 22, accessed February 4, 2026, <https://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/walker/walker.html>.

⁶² Malamud, *African Americans*, 160-62.

⁶³ Kenneth W. Goings and Eugene M. O’Connor, “Lessons Learned: The Role of the Classics at Black Colleges and Universities,” *The Journal of Negro Education* 79, no. 4 (2010): 523.

racial identity of these ancient African peoples was important for ethnographers.⁶⁴ According to Frederick Douglass, the White ethnographer Samuel Morton claimed that the Egyptians “belonged” to Europeans.⁶⁵ An accomplished classicist, Douglass did not unilaterally endorse the field but mined Greco-Roman writings for morsels that would strengthen his argument for Black rights.⁶⁶ Egypt was ripe for the task. In an 1854 commencement speech, Douglass agrees with Morton that Egypt was the cradle of civilization. However, he criticizes Morton’s ethnography as formed from “*prejudice* rather than from *facts*,” suggesting that the characteristics of Egyptians more closely resembled Black Americans.⁶⁷ By then, Egypt had acquired revolutionary grandiosity for many Black scholars — a regality, even, which Owen Nickens immortalized in a famous speech: “In Egypt there stand, reared by the hands of *our* fathers, the magnificent pyramids.”⁶⁸

Conclusion

The central challenge facing Black classicists was one of intellectual reconciliation: how to commit themselves to a discipline closely tied to a civilization that had long justified their marginalization. In resolving that question, they redefined who could access antiquity, how it was taught, and why it mattered. In parallel, they reimagined Classics as global, anticipating modern pushes to do the very same thing by about a century. So too did they predate the debate of Washington and Du Bois. Some historians today might see their shift to Classics as a conservative attempt to fit in with the White world; in 1987 Henry Louis Gates criticized Crummell for just that.⁶⁹ But in studying antiquity critically — to reform it — Black classicists directed a far more radical revolution, that of intellectual rebellion.

⁶⁴ Malamud, *African Americans*, 22.

⁶⁵ Frederick Douglass, “The Claims of the Negro, Ethnologically Considered,” speech presented at Commencement, Western Reserve College, July 12, 1854, Library of Congress, accessed February 10, 2026, <https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/service/rbc/rbaapc/07900/07900.pdf>.

⁶⁶ Hairston, *The Ebony*, 194.

⁶⁷ Douglass, “The Claims,” speech, Library of Congress.

⁶⁸ Malamud, 209; emphasis added.

⁶⁹ Henry Louis Gates, “Authority, (White) Power and the (Black) Critic; It’s All Greek to Me,” *Cultural Critique*, no. 7 (1987).



Figure 1. Portrait of Francis Williams. Source: Unknown. *FRANCIS WILLIAMS, the Jamaican Scholar*. About 1745. Oil on canvas, 66 x 50.1 cm. The Victoria and Albert Museum; London, England; Given by Viscount Bearstead MC and Messrs Spink and Son Ltd. through the National Art Collections Fund, an independent charity; P.83-1928; <http://www.vam.ac.uk/>

APPENDIX B

10289 Morison Avenue

Cleveland, Ohio

March 6, 1945

Dear Langston,

Central High School will be one hundred years old in May and the alumni are planning to celebrate the occasion.

The Alumni Reunion will take place on May tenth. As you are one of Central's most distinguished alumni we are writing you to be with us at that time and read one of your poems. The program will not be a long one, but we want it to be a fine one.

October 12, 1946

Dear Langston,

Thank you very much for the message in your letter. I will write to Mr. Van Vechten [presumably Carl Van Vechten, American writer] when the manuscript is ready and ask him to look at it. (I do hope that it will be finished before we are all dead.) ...

It is good to learn that you are so being, and that you are really making a living out of literature. That really is something. My very best wishes to you.

March 9, 1967

Dear Langston,

Here are two clippings I think you might like to have. Read them in the order marked I & II. Notice that in II he mentions your beautiful book of poems. He didn't know that you went to Central High School as a pupil until I told him.

I am enjoying the poems very much and have begun to memorize some of them. I don't know where you are at present but you will get this note sometime, I know.

Affectionately,

Helen M. Chesnutt

Transcriptions by the author of this paper of selected correspondence between Helen M. Chesnutt and Langston Hughes.

SPECIAL FEATURES

WHAT IS TOPSS?

The Transforming Outcomes Project at Sacramento State (TOPSS) is an effort to provide four-year degrees to incarcerated students at select California state prisons with the ultimate goal of improving affected communities for the benefit of all. TOPSS works with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) and other education partners to provide students with access to in-person instruction in classroom environments inside the prison.

WHAT DOES TOPSS DO?

A conversation with Dr. Aaron Jackson shed some light on the Sacramento State student program. He states “the answer to that depends on your perspective, I suppose. In a way, TOPSS provides intersectional benefits to multiple groups.”

He went on to provide more detail on how the program can help outside of the immediate Sacramento Student population, according to Jackson, “California taxpayers are usually cited as the chief beneficiaries because it costs roughly \$130,000 per person per year to incarcerate someone, and that means taxpayers have a fiscal interest in ensuring that effective rehabilitation takes place, and that’s where recidivism comes in. Recidivism is the tendency to relapse into criminal behavior, which generally means longer sentences and more expense to taxpayers as a result. Education programs like TOPSS reduce recidivism rates dramatically and thus provide a taxpayer benefit, but taxpayers are only one of many interested groups.”

Jackson shows that the benefits also spread to other institutions; he states the “CDCR sees the benefit of in-prison education as it creates safer environments. The university sees benefits in student enrollment and tuition (paid through Pell Grant funding), as well as the opportunity to do what universities do: spread the benefits of education and encourage civic engagement. But the real beneficiaries, in my opinion, are the people in the classroom—both the students and the professors.”

Jackson also did not shy away from tensions in the program, “it’s not controversial to recognize that the school-to-prison pipeline exists for many communities. Lacking resources, economic disparities, tough-on-crime policies, and more meant that many students in TOPSS programs have had their first true exposure to education inside prison. Many started their educational journeys working on their GED. Some were able to take community college courses by mail. Relatively recently, the decision to extend Pell Grants to incarcerated students has made in-person programs like TOPSS available, allowing these students to have face-to-face access to college professors and vice versa. The result is an exchange of ideas and perspectives that creates new opportunities for growth and instills a desire to give back to their communities in positive, meaningful ways. Ultimately, when TOPSS students complete their sentences and return to their communities, they’re not *just* less likely to reoffend and return to prison—they’re well-positioned to give back and make positive contributions that, hopefully, will reduce the need for prisons in the future.”

So, when asked exactly what does TOPSS do, Jackson said it is a simple program that benefits both students and the community, “we work with our partners and students to reduce recidivism by promoting education, civic engagement, and humanitarian ideals.”

TOPSS FACULTY

The faculty is drawn from various departments and is constructed to fill the curriculum within the program.

Ph.D. Aaron Jackson – History

Dr. Tom Clarke – History

Dr. Jim German – History

Dr. Zelens – Criminal Justice

Dr. Morris – Sociology

Dr. Wheeler – Philosophy

This special feature presents scholarship by students currently enrolled in the TOPSS program at Sacramento State, which extends university coursework to incarcerated learners. Editorial revisions have been minimal, preserving each author's voice and argument as written.

THE ANOMIC BIRTHING OF A SOCIETAL COVENANT THROUGH THE AMBIGUITIES OF AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP

BRIAN ANDERSON

One may live their whole life in an alternative reality like the thought-provoking movie *The Matrix*, in which a malevolent computer program circumvents the mind and virulently siphons off the essence of one's soul for the benefit of the privileged. While deeply entranced into this matrix, sometimes an individual gets a spark of cognitive dissonance that flares up within one's mind, setting up a chain reaction of heightened awareness of each reality.

In this reality, the brain starts to internalize things like education, literature, lectures, lessons of morality, and knowledge grounded in truth. Embracing these constructive internalizations was like me choosing the red pill in *The Matrix*, allowing one's consciousness to experience the intricacies of American reality. This reality goes against everything that I have been taught or experienced as a deviant that once embraced criminality and gang membership as a way of life. This reality causes one to question my nascent understanding and knowledge of the social world.

"The Anomic Birthing Of A Societal Covenant Through The Ambiguities Of American Citizenship," is simply meant to imply that the ongoing struggles and contradictions over citizenship is starting to breakdown the very fabric of our democratic values, consequently producing a hyphenated America.¹ The fundamental questions we must confront are: "What is citizenship, and which processes of American citizenship are breaking down in contemporary society? What compels a segment of the American population to foster disunity by promoting a perverted understanding of rights, responsibilities, and the shared identities that define what it means to be a 'good' American? What role can I play in opposing the deleterious and divisive realities of disunity perpetrated by individuals motivated by selfish agendas?"

Citizenship is a social contract that binds individuals into a system predicated upon the right to life, liberty, pursuit of prosperity, and justice for all. These rights are conferred to the average American through birth, naturalization, and other mechanisms of the immigration system. Having been born in America and spending over three decades in prison immersed in gang culture, I rejected this privileged covenant by living within a matrix of disunity, violence, and callousness against my fellow citizens.

My constitution was the code of the streets, my allegiance was solely to myself, and my objectives were to harm and take away from my community inside and outside of prison. I was complicit in violating the ideals of American society because I had contempt for the rancorous reality I lived. But through the collective efforts of society, constant counsel from family, rehabilitative laws, and the opportunities at higher learning—one has been blessed with prestigious college professors that teach their disciplines skillfully and are living examples of productively participating in society. I am now starting to understand the significance of citizenship and my duties as an American.

Even though I have caused harm to my community, the philanthropic energies of my extended community have provided me with the means to reconcile. This recalls Theodore Roosevelt's insidious speech in which he asserts, "There is no room in this country for hyphenated Americanism. For a hyphenated American, is no American

¹ Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 11th ed. (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 2003), s.v. "anomic," "birthing," "ambiguities," "covenant."

at all. The only man who is a good American, is the man who is American and nothing else.”² Notwithstanding the insidiousness attached to Roosevelt’s speech—he did tap into a sentiment that expressed that being a ‘citizen’ is about being actively engaged in governance and having allegiance to your family (citizens of the United States).

We Americans are a mixture of interdependent parts that adhere to an established set of governing rules that grants us the freedom to pursue happiness, security, liberty, and to aspire. These freedoms come with a duty of maintaining the upkeep of your home (America) and your family (Americans), that means paying your taxes, obeying the law, upholding the ideals of America, and to participate in its governance by voting, running for office, or joining the military. This is what is implicitly demanded of Americans by birth or naturalization.

My criminal behavior was the antithesis of this covenant by perpetuating harm and causing disunity to my family that I now strive to repair, even as others exploit the same social covenant in far more perverse ways that highlight the gap between false realities promoted by the elites... including the Democratic and Republican party establishments.

Governmental leaders, elected officials, and other influential figures have created policy that violates the American covenant to generate a reality akin to their perceptions. Take for instance, the Japanese Internment Camps between 1942-1944 illustrated by George Takei, in which mass incarceration of Japanese Americans was set in motion and spearheaded by Earl Warren (California’s Attorney General) because of racist views that Japanese Americans could not be loyal to America and were an exponential threat to the safety and security of the United States.³ President Franklin D. Roosevelt, with the significant backing of Congress, and the House of Representatives, “proclaimed that every adult Japanese citizen inside the U.S. was now an ‘Alien Enemy’ and must follow strict regulations” by issuing Executive Order 9066 (Feb. 19, 1942).⁴ The immorality of this issuance was that America broke its covenant with Japanese Americans and rendered their citizenship and constitutional rights moot.

Present day Americans now have a sense that our self-manifested hyphenated parts can be deleteriously pitted against one another, vilifying a portion of the American people, thus allowing actions like Donald Trump’s executive order ending birthright citizenship for children born in America by parents of undocumented immigrants to be rationalized.⁵ This leads to one to give credence to the ambiguities of the protections granted by the Constitution by exposing how the breakdown of core elements of American citizenship can be violated to fit a particular narrative.

Picking and choosing our leaders can have a significant impact on the shaping of our society, especially when it comes down to the morality of our leaders, character of our country, and ourselves as Americans. Take for instance, Republican Tom McClintock of California’s 5th Congressional District and Republican Brian Babin of Texas 36th Congressional District who argues that ending ‘birthright citizenship’ will prevent incentivizing illegal immigration and strengthen national security.⁶ I believe that such political views perverts the Citizenship Clause and undermines the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution, risking wide spread legal and social instability.

This approach perpetuates harm and disunity, demonstrating how ideology, money, and ambitions can override civic responsibility and erode the moral foundation of citizenship. Having spent decades navigating systematic violence, traumas, and criminality within the confines of these prison walls, I am shamefully able to recognize the decadency of government officials stooping to the behaviors analogous of rival prison gangs. Republicans v. Demo-

² Theodore Roosevelt, *Americanism* (New Haven, CT: Knights of Columbus, 1915).

³ George Takei, Justin Eisinger, and Steven Scott, *They Called Us Enemy*, illus. Harmony Becker (Marietta, GA: Top Shelf Productions, 2019).

⁴ Takei, Eisinger, and Scott, *They Called Us Enemy*, 16.

⁵ Brian Bennett, “What to Know About Trump’s Order on Birthright Citizenship and the Legal Battle Around It,” *Time*, January 21, 2025, <https://time.com/7208965/birthright-citizenship-trump-order/>.

⁶ “The Pros and Cons of Birthright Citizenship,” *Congressional Digest* 104, no. 6 (2025).

crats, Red States v. Blue States each exploiting divisions for power, money, and ideology, while ordinary Americans suffer the consequences. Doesn't this sound like how Blood and Crip gangs' beef with one another? Ensnared citizens of this malignant agenda across the country are beginning to recognize this stark reality and are now speaking out against these disingenuous politicians and other government officials.

The manipulation and perverting of Americans' benevolence to do right amongst each other continues to foment social discord, not only just to those who we disagree with—but also to the people we are most aligned with. Think about the immorality of the Supreme Court precedent set by the Dred Scott decision, that highlighted the fragility of citizenship via ruling African Americans were considered property rather than people. Native Americans were denied birthright citizenship up until the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924, and the Supreme Court's decision in Wong Kim Ark which Wong had to fight to get his citizenship recognized by the United States. These above examples epitomizes that the lived experience for marginalized Americans was antithetical of what it meant to be a citizen. Being beaten, raped, killed, and dehumanized because of your skin tone or immigration status is still a lived reality for marginalized people, but the perseverance of those Americans to still have faith in the ideals of America is testament to their devotion to citizenship.

The current immigration ordeal showcases how strenuous one's constitutional rights can be for illegal immigrants and their children born on U.S. soil. The fight for maintaining residency and keeping families together in America for many illegal immigrants in this current political climate is truly humbling. I am ashamed of the squandered freedoms & opportunities that I took for granted throughout my 51-years of existence. American citizenship is a blessing that many of us take for granted or truly don't understand it's significance. It further reveals how morality can be circumvented to stimulate the systematic imbalances fueled by insidious political motives or vilified social indifferences, that allows a segment of society to disregard the morality one would exhibit to his/her own family.

The social covenant binding Americans together is based on a premise that we all play part in each other's well-being. By doing what is good and moral helps to maintain a healthy family, people that are involved with criminality, prejudice, and cruelty against their fellow citizens perpetuate a disease that eats at the very fabric of society. Despots, tyrants, racists, criminals, and unscrupulous people really believe that they are entitled to trampling over other people's rights for their own benefit by promoting a distorted view of reality. Through the lens of morality infused with the ideals of America calls out for every one of us to be civil to one another and reject abominable views.

From the virulent and degenerate nuances of prison politics to the Honors Program studies at Sacramento State University, one begins to appreciate the tenets of civility through the learned disciplines of history, that expose patterns of oppression repeated throughout time. Law reveals how the Constitution is a living document that governs our society. Sociology shows the social dynamics that allow constructs like fear, misinformation, and exclusion to thrive. Philosophy interrogates morality and justice by questioning how we conduct ourselves as individuals and as a society. Restorative justice emphasizes accountability and repairing harm. The history of medicine illustrates how the human costs of innovation and institutional failure have led to the uptick of mental health and other health related issues. Psychology allows one to see a different reality through the filter of cognitive processes that underscores the collective responsibility of keeping this societal covenant intact. The above disciplines invite you to challenge old beliefs and develop a new reality based on the principles of higher learning.

By applying lessons learned from my lived experiences and knowledge gained through my studies at California State University, Sacramento, Honors Program—in a positive and constructive way is a benefit to the community and to the health of American democracy. In my Honors 103 Civic Engagement class on how civility is integral to the health of our society, classmates Elijah and Erick express the following mindsets.⁷

“We are attempting to offset the balance of the scales that our crimes inflicted,” so we can be worthy of our citizenship. Although we have deviated from our obligation to the social contract, we are trying to reestablish that agreement by taking a leadership role in emphasizing the importance of repairing the broken relationships that we have caused through our crimes.

⁷“HONORS 103: Civic Engagement, Pursuant the Public Good” (course, California State University, Sacramento).

Civility is everyone doing their part in a wholesome fashion in facilitating being a good American. Barack Obama eloquently articulates this approach by asserting the “Constitution envisions a road map by which we marry passion to reason, the ideal of individual freedom to the demands of community” is a sentiment that I have come to realize via higher learning.⁸ Civility acknowledges that we all present different faces to productively socialize within our interdependent communities, this is how we evolve socially. Choosing which face we give our optimal energy will become the prominent face that we will unconsciously show to the world. I am choosing to exert my energy in becoming a more engaged citizen that is grounded in the ideals of Americanism.

America is an enigma; it was founded upon contradictions but evolved through ideals. The pressing reality about America is embracing that democracy is messy, inefficient, conflict-ridden, and that it is fallible. Nonetheless, our country has also shown its resiliency in protecting and advancing the most basic freedoms and liberties. It has shown the aptitude to correct immorality or show compassion not only to its own citizens, but also to the citizens of countries that mean us harm. America is the atypical parent who has dual responsibilities of being the mother (nurturer) and father (disciplinarian) when it comes to this interconnected American family. Its citizens are the extended family that sometimes bicker and fight, but through actively participating in this American experiment, we are encouraged to engage fully with governance, learn to understand social issues, and develop tolerance for our fellow Americans.

Interacting with others for causes greater than oneself, shifts attitudes, and builds appreciation for differences amongst our diverse society. It also instills fundamental democratic values, including trustworthiness, fairness, and accountability. In sum, the United States has an obligation to protect its citizens and “we” Americans have the duty to aid in those obligations.

The brave Harlem Hellfighters in World War 1, who fought for freedoms they were denied, the respect that was absent, and the fortitude for wanting to break the shackles of ‘marginalization’ before the world, is indicative on the resiliency of the American spirit and fortitude.⁹ James Baldwin postulates how a segment of Americans who, “were born into a society which spelled out in brutal clarity, and as in many ways as possible, that you were a worthless human being. You were not expected to aspire to excellence: you were expected to make peace with mediocrity;” in which privileged structures within the American system promoted this self-manifested destiny for a segment of its disenfranchised or marginalized population for centuries, while simultaneously promoting the ideals of the American dream.¹⁰ America with all of its flaws and contradictions still provides the ideals and mechanisms that reflect that “we the people” can help out our current state of affairs by embracing the tireless work of civil rights advocates or social workers who are advancing equality, confronting bigotry, and making a difference by learning how to “eat an elephant” one bite at a time.¹¹

This is exemplified by military veterans like Professor Aaron Jackson (Ph.D.) at Sacramento State University, who in service of his country sacrificed a ‘piece’ of himself that left a sense of perpetual dejectedness. Dr. Jackson for a long time adhered to the timeless adages of “don’t complain about the problem; think about the solution! Don’t linger on mistakes, move on to the next objective” that assumedly desensitized him to the realities of the mental and spiritual costs of protecting my rights and the liberties of all Americans via his military service.

In dealing with his depression from losing his sense of purpose and comradeship by being in the military, Dr. Jackson was forced to confront his mental illness dubbed an ‘elephant’ by learning how to ask for help.

“We humans are social creatures, so when our community is disrupted—like when we leave the military, or when we enter or leave prison—the transition can be difficult. The key is finding a

⁸ Barack Obama, *The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2006).

⁹ Max Brooks, *The Harlem Hellfighters* (New York: Broadway Books, 2014).

¹⁰ James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993).

¹¹ Aaron Jackson, “A Guide to Eating Elephants” (lecture, California State University, Sacramento, 2025).

community that can support you, that knows what you are going through and is willing to help you eat that elephant.”

Dr. Jackson found that community—along with his fellow comrades and the members at an VA outreach center, energetically helped him tackle his post-military mental illness by teaching him to eat that ‘elephant’, one piece at a time.

Dr. Jackson now has a new objective; he spends his time instructing and lecturing his new comrades (students) on what civil service means and how the health of the individual constitutes the well-being of the whole. I truly thank Professor Jackson for imparting wholesome knowledge to the students at Folsom State Prison on how to eat their ‘elephants’—one bite at a time.¹² America requires its constituents to demonstrate courage, sacrifice, and to be resilient even when things seem hopeless. This patriotic ideology, allegiance, and benevolence that transcends any perceived differences helps to make this country the symbol of hope and freedom.

These reflections are a short representation of how higher education expands one’s mind. I am of the opinion that the Fourteenth Amendment reinforces the legal foundation of equality and protection under the law and that it exposes the historical exploitation and the erasure of marginalized communities which is a testament to my social and intellectual growth.¹³ The canons of a ‘good citizen’ requires adhering to social norms, actively participate in democracy, being tolerant of others, and defending the societal covenant in furtherance of American ideals. My civic responsibility of educating myself, mentoring others, and advocating for justice is one way to make living amends to repair the harm that I have caused. This is how one can directly contribute to the solutions that strengthen the societal covenant and ensure democracy remains a space for engagement, accountability, and unity rather than division and fear. My lived experience as a convict, husband, father, and a plethora of other roles; but my most prestigious role is that of an American citizen. The Honors Program at the California State University, Sacramento was pivotal in helping me realize this fact. One has gained a profound understanding of the moral, social, and the civic dynamics of American engagement and citizenship.

Having the capability to transform this knowledge and lived experience into an action that promotes equality, tolerance, human dignity, and ensuring that democracy fulfills its promise of inclusivity for all is a responsibility that I have optimistically come to embrace and eager to proliferate. Furthermore, embracing education as a powerful tool that also imparts an obligation to the beneficiary to help inspire or mentor the next generation of young Americans consider the benefits of education and civic service is something that has to be an integral part of my character and message moving forward.

In conclusion, using my carceral setting as a catalyst in obtaining a college education has afforded me the means to challenge my old Machiavellian ways of thinking and the yearning to develop a meaningful bond with society. Understanding that the dynamics of citizenship can be experienced through the filter of civility is a reality that I have come to embrace. One can choose the blue pill—thus continue to endure an unscrupulous reality, or the red pill—that awakens you to an altruistic reality upheld by those of us who believe in life, liberty, and justice for all. Whether you cultivate the positive and salient aspects of American citizenship or work futilely to pervert it, America has a covenant with you regardless of whatever path you choose in life. Citizenship is a working covenant amongst all Americans and America herself. Being civil to one another promotes a moral law that continues to shape America to this very day.

America’s ideals are the driving force that teaches all mankind are one big family and that if we harm, cheat, or be intolerant of each other—we are only harming, cheating, and being intolerant of ourselves. We are not hyphenated Americans—we are America. Hellen Keller says it best, “The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or touched. They must be felt with the heart”—the love for citizenship and the American community.

¹² Jackson, “A Guide to Eating Elephants.”

¹³ Farah Peterson, “The Fourteenth Amendment and the *Vénus Noire*,” *William and Mary Law Review* 66, no. 1 (2024): 191.

THE MEANING OF CITIZENSHIP —THE JOURNEY FOR AFRICAN AMERICANISM A COUNTRY OF FREEDOM

JEFFRI ROBERTS

Citizenship is more than a legal term for African American people residing in an area: it is a moral and political claim to belonging to a place and to a society. For African Americans in this country, the meaning of citizenship has been shaped by exclusion, burden, and resistance. From the French colonial “Blood Tax,” which required military sacrifice without granting equal rights, to Frederick Douglass’s thoughts that freedom without citizenship was meaningless, to Malcolm X’s rejection of America’s empty promises, James Baldwin’s reflection on estrangement, and W.E.B. Du Bois’s double consciousness—African American thinkers have continually redefined what citizenship looks like in America. Citizenship is more than a legal term for African Americans; it is a moral and political claim to belonging to the land they built and the society they learned to survive and sustain in. There are laws that defined formal citizenship on paper; however, African Americans have argued that citizenship must also exist in practice, protection, and recognition. From the conception of U.S. history, the concept of freedom has been aloof, and the meaning of citizenship has been shaped and manufactured by exclusion, empty promises, and resistance. From the French colonial “blood tax,” which demanded military sacrifice before granting equal rights, to Frederick Douglass’s thoughts on freedom without citizenship being incomplete and hollow, W.E.B. Du Bois’s concept of “double consciousness” illustrates that African Americans possess a “natural” right of belonging yet remain reduced to seeing themselves through the eyes of a nation that refuses to acknowledge their full humanity. Also, James Baldwin’s reflection on estrangement, his critiques on America’s failure to live up to its own promises of equality and democratic inclusion. African American thinkers and activists have redefined citizenship in America as the horrified lived experience of unbroken chains that need to be connected back together.

In colonial French history, the *impôt du sang*—which literally means “blood tax”—was the term for conscripting Black colonial subjects into the French army during World War I. Tens of thousands of West Africans fought and died for a country that denied them equal political rights. The “blood tax” exposes the contradiction of citizenship that was promised but denied. Black colonial subjects were forced to sacrifice as if they were citizens but were never recognized as such. And this contradiction has long existed for African Americans. In some areas and ways, these contradictions still exist to this very day. African Americans have fought in every American war since the Revolution, domestically and abroad. Yet historically, African Americans have been denied equal rights at home. America’s parallel to France underscores that citizenship is hollow when it demands sacrifice without granting dignity or equality.

Frederick Douglass argued that emancipation alone was insufficient—true freedom requires citizenship. He declared, “From the first I saw no chance of bettering the conditions of the freeman, until he should cease to be merely a freeman and should become a citizen.”¹ In his famous 1852 address, *What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?*, Douglass exposed the hypocrisy of American liberty: “The rich inheritance of justice, liberty, prosperity, and independence is shared by you, not by me. The sunlight that brought life and healing to you, has brought stripes and death to me.”² He insisted that the United States must keep its promises not just to one man but to all men. Frederick Douglass played a significant intellectual role in the political and moral shaping of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments, which aimed to change the legal and civic status of African Americans after the Civil War. Although Douglass was not a lawmaker himself, his speeches, writings, and political influence pushed the federal government to expand African American citizenship and rights. This laid the foundation for Malcolm X to have his thoughts about the citizenship of African Americans in the United States of America.

¹ Frederick Douglass, quoted in U.S. Senate, *Frederick Douglass Bicentennial Tribute*, Congressional Record, February 14, 2017.

² Frederick Douglass, “What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?” (speech, Rochester, NY, July 5, 1852).

A century later, Malcolm X challenged whether African Americans were citizens at all. In Malcolm's 1963 speech, *Message to the Grassroots*, he declared: "You don't catch hell because you're a Baptist... you sure don't catch hell because you're an American... if you were an American, you wouldn't catch hell." His point was that being labeled a citizen did not mean being treated as one.

Malcolm argued that, for Black Americans, citizenship was truly a paradox: they were told they belonged to the nation but were excluded in practice, and he understood that it was an international human rights issue, framing the struggle as larger than U.S. citizenship.³

James Baldwin's ideas, formed a generation before Malcolm's, blew over to Malcolm like weather changing seasons. James Baldwin gave a more intimate view of citizenship by highlighting the alienation of Black Americans. In his "Letter from a Region in My Mind," he observes, "Whatever white people do not know about Negroes reveals, precisely and inexorably, what they do not know about themselves."⁴ Citizenship, for Baldwin, exposed America's failure to confront its racial history. In "Stranger in the Village," Baldwin described being permanently an outsider: "I remain as much a stranger today as I was the first day I arrived." Being Black in America, for Baldwin, meant being a stranger in one's own land. Baldwin grounded his critique in loyalty: "I love America more than any other country in this world, and exactly for this reason, I insist on the right to criticize her perpetually." Citizenship is not passive acceptance but critical engagement.

James Baldwin's frame of mind was parallel with W.E.B. Du Bois, with different answers to the same question. W.E.B. Du Bois is regarded as one of the most influential sociologists and civil rights intellectuals of the twentieth century. Du Bois devoted his life and career to the conditions of African American people and explored the profound challenges they faced in a nation built on freedom yet thriving on inequality. In his famous work *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), he introduces the idea of double consciousness—the feeling of having one's identity divided into two conflicting parts of one's self.⁵ According to Du Bois, African Americans are forced to view themselves both through their own experiences and through a white society that considers them inferior. This constant pressure creates an internal struggle of attempting to find their identity as African Americans while living in America. Du Bois argued that this psychological burden came from generational oppression—slavery, segregation, and legalized discrimination.⁶ Black people were taught American values of liberty and equality but were excluded from enjoying them. The struggle for dignity was not personal, but it reflected a larger national contradiction in America. Du Bois believed that, for true democracy, Black citizens must be recognized fully without any discrimination on their identity.

Regardless of being denied equality, Du Bois called attention to how African Americans continually demonstrated the strongest sense of civic engagement that citizens could possibly display. African Americans contributed the labor force that built the nation, fought in its wars, and developed its culture, all the while being treated as second-class citizens and at times not even human.⁷ Du Bois condemned a system that demanded obedience and participation from Black people but refused them political rights such as voting, fair education, and equal protection under the law. Du Bois bravely challenged this inequality by promoting education, activism, and racial pride. He envisioned a leadership group called the "Talented Tenth" that would help uplift the African American community through scholarship and racial influence.

Du Bois's "double consciousness" was the precursor to contemporary citizenship: "the illusion of inclusion." Contemporary citizenship for many African Americans is lived within a paradox. The law of the land promises full equal protection and inclusion in the benefits of the country. Yet daily experiences reveal how conditional

³ Richard Deshay Elliott, *Malcolm X's Analysis of Citizenship and Rights for Black Americans* (Morgan State University, 2019).

⁴ James Baldwin, "Letter from a Region in My Mind," *The New Yorker*, November 9, 1962.

⁵ W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (A.C. McClurg & Co., 1903), 2–3.

⁶ Du Bois, *Souls of Black Folk*, 5–6.

⁷ Du Bois, *Souls of Black Folk*, 10–12.

citizenship and inclusion can be. On paper, citizenship grants equal protection and equal access to opportunity such as voting rights, but in truth, the practice of systemic inequalities in policing, voting, housing, education, and economic prosperity reminds African Americans of the injustices that have been done and continue to be displayed. The blatant disregard and hypocrisy are what create the illusion of inclusion: the sense that participation is allowed but not welcomed, that rights exist but are not equally protected, that we can have dignity but not be shown respect. African Americans are acknowledged only when it serves the purpose of everyone else's benefit. The gap between legal status and lived experience is totally different from others in the country; African Americans continue to have to negotiate their legitimacy under the pressure of identity, safety, and recognition.

Citizenship becomes a performance, constantly trying to appeal to the dominant culture of the country. Even as African Americans contribute a great deal to the country, our full citizenship is often questioned through coded language, such as the "Black Codes," disproportionate standards, laws, and policies that only affect African Americans. It is almost like African Americans exist in an open prison in America with guidelines to govern them, because the laws and rules are set to keep a race of people in perpetual bondage and calamity. African Americans have fought and sacrificed in every war on the soil of America yet are viewed as second-class citizens when it comes to being treated equally by others.

The French "blood tax," Frederick Douglass, Malcolm X, and James Baldwin reveal that for African Americans, citizenship has never been a settled question. It has been demanded, denied, critiqued, and reimagined since the conception of this country. Douglass envisioned it as the essential condition of freedom; Malcolm X exposed its absence in practice; Baldwin embodied its contradictions. Together, the three of them and their words show that citizenship is not just a legal structure but a lived struggle—measured by sacrifice, recognition, and ongoing fight for justice. The illusion of inclusion becomes a clear vision viewed through suffering eyes that yearned for change. Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. Du Bois, Malcolm X, and James Baldwin: these great thinkers across different generations expose the contradictions at the heart of American democracy. With their collective wisdom and the African American experience, we can reject the "illusion of inclusion" and demand citizenship rooted in equality and not in conditions, citizenship that is not selective but citizenship that is real.

CITIZENSHIP: AS I UNDERSTAND IT

SOLOMON M. RUIZ

Citizenship is about connection, and feeling connected to humanity is essential for the public good. Since the womb, every human is shaped into social creatures; people are meant to live in union and connection. John Bowlby, a psychology researcher who studied attachment in infancy, wrote, “The infant’s attachment behavior towards their mother [is] connected to instinctual responses.”¹ Socially and psychologically, humans have needs. These needs are depicted by Abraham Maslow, a respected psychologist, as necessities for healthy brain development.² Not having these needs trickles into individualistic distorted cognitive beliefs and communal dysfunction. When people become unattached and lack fundamental aspects of attachment, they feel isolated, alone, and out of touch. Their lives feel meaningless. I believe that citizenship is much more than claiming to be a part of a homeland; it is about the gentle whispers of an inner voice or a loud roar saying, “I am not alone.” Citizenship fills an innate need that we are part of something bigger than self. Citizenship is about belonging. This paper explores the essence of citizenship as more than legal status: it is a universal need to connect and belong.

Citizenship is subjective. A common definition for the word citizenship is legal status, which implies rights and privileges. Typically, legal citizenship in America can be acquired through naturalization or through birthright citizenship, which secures the protection guaranteed by the United States Constitution. Citizenship is associated with obligations through a social contract. Relinquishing some rights in benefit of receiving agreed-upon protections of the government structures culture and acceptable living conditions of society. It is important to pay close attention to how social constructs shape ideologies within individual and collective perception. Citizenship often creates identity and social roles, meaning accepted norms within a given community. Citizenship tends to unite members of similar cultural views, but it can isolate and separate others who have differing philosophies. Many people are patriotic, with qualities pertaining to shared values within their nation. Living patriotically is not a problem; however, living in an ethnocentric fashion with the belief that one type of citizen is more important than another is a fallacy. Much of citizenship is about hyper-labeling and is defined by groups of certain characteristics which seem to join people with similar ideologies, lifestyles, or other socially constructed criteria. On one end, citizenship is the glue which holds the structure of community together and establishes common legal rights granted thereof; yet, simultaneously, it can hinder connection and unity by distinguishing differences. Such divisions go against traditional and more meaningful forms of citizenship.

Citizenship is paradoxical. On one end, it builds a sense of connection and shared ideologies, but insidiously it can also form division between groups by isolating those of different belief systems. Parts of contemporary society use citizenship to alienate and draw differences; yet it is vital to recognize that citizenship in any form involves addressing the desire to belong. It is imperative for society to grasp the innate need to belong and the interconnectedness of humanity. Harmony and living justly begins with erasing societal boundaries and barriers, and by creating bridges which unite. Citizenship indicates the notion of fellowship; it means individuals are gathered cohesively. Citizenship signifies people are not by themselves. If citizenship requires human interaction, then citizenship is about connections. Feeling connected to others in some form or another establishes relationships. When considering the vast assemblies of citizenship throughout the world, it is not surprising to recognize how communities flourished by their close-knit bonds. We live in societies that thrive by the nature of their civilizations. Begüm Babür, a social psychologist, writes, “Why does being excluded hurt so much? From an evolutionary standpoint, our brains likely evolved to treat social rejection as a threat. For our ancestors, losing social bonds meant losing access to protection, resources, and cooperation—making social connection and belonging a fundamental human

¹ John Bowlby, *Attachment and Loss*, vol. 1, *Attachment* (New York: Basic Books, 1969/1982), as cited in Alejandro Valencia, “Through a Tinted Glass: How Attachment Styles Shape Autobiographical Memory” (2023), 28.

² Abraham Maslow, “A Theory of Human Motivation,” *Psychological Review* 50, no. 4 (1943): 370–96.

need.”³ The awareness of universal desires to be connected and to belong is nothing new. This type of understanding is transformative because it develops a relativity between citizenship as a need to belong and connect. Recognition of this phenomenon is the link that bridges the barriers and closes the gap, which so easily hinders humanity from togetherness and unification. The Apostle Paul says:

For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body... For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free... If the foot should say, ‘Because I am not a hand, I am not the body,’ is it therefore not of the body? And the eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I have no need of you’; nor the head to the feet, ‘I have no need of you’... There should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.⁴

This analogy, although representative of the body of the church, emphasizes responsibility individualistically, but also collectively. As Paul describes there are “many parts to the body, but one body,” so there are many types of citizenships, yet one human race. I reason that every human being is a global citizen of humanity. Unfortunately, many societies create subcultures that divide the citizenship of humanity. By being connected to others, people are more likely to show love, compassion, and empathy with others. Moving forward into a more bearable human-kind requires healthy civic engagements, which can only be watered through recognizing the worthiness of every citizen, and providing healthy nutrients for the body and soul. At a basic level, citizenship can be seen as belonging—to one’s nation, state, and community—that echoes humans’ evolutionary need for social connection. Life is not always sunshine and blue skies. Everyone will suffer. Sebastian Junger, author of *Tribe: On Homecoming and Belonging*, wrote, “Humans don’t mind hardship; in fact, they thrive on it. What they mind is not feeling necessary. Modern society has perfected the art of making people not feel necessary.”⁵ Early childhood experiences influenced my perceptions of myself and the world. At a young age, I did not know how to see past adverse childhood effects, and because of it, I felt unnecessary. I lost all motivation to live. My insanity was my disconnect from humanity.

A meaningless life is dangerous. Although I have lived most of my life feeling unnecessary, I now feel necessary. I accredit this paradigm shift to ordinary conversations with my peers and the hospitality of the many professors, instructors, and mentors who spent their time investing in my personal development—specifically, Dr. Jackson, Dr. Wheeler, Dr. Zelenz, Dr. Clark, Dr. Morris, and Dr. Furio. Sacramento State University’s Honors Program has helped me establish friendships, and in those relationships, I was awakened to new perspectives that I now cherish empathetically. Educational settings helped me learn more about myself by listening to others. I became connected where I once believed I was disconnected. Providing an opportunity for me to engage in education is undeniably equipped me to be a productive member of society, but the support also invigorates a sense of belonging and brings meaning to my life. Being enrolled in Sacramento State University means I matter; it means I have a place to be, that I am seen, necessary, and that I belong. Better understanding the needs of humans can help better understand citizenship. Feeling seen, heard, and recognized fills the void of needing acceptance, which are fundamentals of citizenship. Somewhere along the road, people deviated from kinship. Polarization is spreading rapidly by the creation of subcultures that focus on differences rather than similarities. A respected pioneer in restorative practices, Judge Joseph Flies-Away, says, “Spirituality helps to connect and bind us to each other as a community, as a tribe and as a nation. It clarifies relationships and is what makes healing happen.”⁶ Attachment is part of citizenship; yet, attaching perceptions to differences rather than similarities distracts from the true essence of citizenship. Despite diverse types of citizenships, which compartmentalize and categorize, human beings are

³ Begüm Babür, “Your Brain Learns from Rejection — Here’s How It Becomes Your Compass for Connection,” *The Conversation*, June 9, 2025.

⁴ 1 Corinthians 12:12–13, 15, 21, 25–26 (New King James Version).

⁵ Sebastian Junger, *Tribe: On Homecoming and Belonging* (New York: Hachette Book Group, 2016), Introduction.

⁶ Joseph Flies-Away, quoted in L. Mirsky, “Restorative Justice Practices of Native America: First Nation and Other Indigenous People of North America, Part One,” *Restorative Practices eForum* (2004).

tied together by the fabric of humanity. Recognition of the interconnectedness of humanity has the capacity to transform the ways society views citizenship, and the ways people treat each other. Alfred Adler, who was the first president of the Vienna Psychoanalytical Society, states, “The happiness of mankind lies in working together, in living as if each individual had set himself the task of contributing to... common welfare.”⁷ By transforming outlooks of what it means to be a worldwide citizen, people will begin to see various demographics through a new lens, which treasures diversity as a unique aspect of life. Citizenship is people just wanting to belong. Citizenship is about being connected to a greater cause; it involves a sense of value and worth that transcends the individual and incorporates collective belonging for public good.

⁷ Alfred Adler, *Superiority and Social Interest* (New York: Norton, 1964), cited in Rose M. Spielman, William J. Jenkins, and Marilyn D. Lovett, *Psychology 2e* (Houston: Rice University, 2020).

WOMEN IN MUSIC: A TOWER RECORDS CELEBRATION

From the blues queens of the 1920s to the genre-defying artists shaping today's charts, women have been at the heart of popular music's most defining moments. They have brought raw innovation and emotional power to every corner of the musical landscape, from rock and soul to hip-hop, country, and classical. Yet for much of music history, their contributions were overlooked and underrepresented, making celebration an overdue corrective.

Tower Records built its identity on the idea that music belongs to everyone, and this playlist extends that premise. The women gathered here scored movements, named experiences that had gone unnamed, and shaped the cultural record in ways too often credited elsewhere. Their inclusion in this issue is intentional. Whether you are meeting these artists for the first time or returning to voices you already know, we invite you to listen with the same attention you bring to the page.



Figure 1. Women of Tower Records Spotify Playlist



Figure 2. Aretha Franklin – Genre defying figure of the 1960s.



Figure 3. Madonna – Redefining pop since the 1980s.

DR. LUKE WOOD ON COMING HOME: SACRAMENTO STATE UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT REFLECTS ON HISTORY, STUDENTS OF COLOR, AND THE UNIVERSITY SAC STATE IS BECOMING—AN INTERVIEW WITH EDITOR AMY DAVEY



Figure 1. Dr. J. Luke Wood pictured with his brother, Joshua Wood, also a Sac State Alum. Photograph by Amy Davey. February 19, 2026.

Luke Wood fell in love with history at Sacramento State.

As an undergraduate student on this campus, he pursued a degree with an emphasis in Black history, not as an abstract academic exercise, but as a way of understanding his own experience alongside the patterns he was watching play out in the lives of Black students around him. That framework, forged as a student here, is the one he still uses.

Wood returned to Sacramento State in 2023 as its president, the first alumnus in the university's history to hold that office. Asked how his training as a historian shapes his approach to the presidency; he did not hesitate. Historical thinking, he said, is foundational to his work.

"History is an essential quality in education," Wood said. The discipline gave him the ability to see across time, to recognize patterns that repeat, and to understand how institutions either respond to those patterns or perpetuate them.

For Wood, three patterns have defined the experience of students of color in American education across generations. The first is distress, chronic, and systemic, capable of leading to destructive outcomes. The second is disregard, the marginalization of students of color in institutions that should be serving them. The third is what he describes as a pathology of disdain, a tendency to treat the cultures and intellects of students of color as deficits rather than assets, reflected in the historic over-placement of Black and brown students in special education programs not as genuine support but as a sorting mechanism.

They are patterns he intends to dismantle at Sac State. "I want to replace those," he said, "and cultivate the brilliance of our students of color."

Asked what he foresees for the discipline of history at Sac State, Wood responded that "History is one of the more important aspects of a full education." He envisions history playing a central role in the curriculum at the proposed downtown Sacramento campus, making these courses available to a wider array of students at this more accessible location.

When asked about his nationally unprecedented programs and what it means to place a university campus in the civic and legislative heart of California, Wood was direct about his ambition. "Sacramento State is becoming a national university with regional ties," he said. "I want Sac State to be the number one flagship in the CSU system. There is no reason for us not to be. We are located in the capital of the fourth largest economy in the world."

Getting there, he said, means building on what the institution already does well. "We are leveraging our strengths," Wood said, pointing to athletics, public policy, and diversity as the pillars that were already working before he arrived. Programs like Combat U and the Basic Needs Center extend that same logic, addressing student health and wellbeing as foundations for academic success.

"We are emphasizing what we do well to move Sac State to the national spotlight." He knows the History Department will be there to document the campus's achievements on its path to national prominence.

BOOK REVIEWS

***Under Alien Skies: Environment, Suffering, and the Defeat of the British Military in Revolutionary America.* By Vaughn Scribner. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2024. 1, 234 pp. Notes. Index. Photographs. \$29.95, paperback.**

Under Alien Skies is a historical monograph written by Vaughn Scribner, an associate professor at the University of Central Arkansas. Published in 2024, this book presents an argument that the exotic American environment caused physical and psychological struggles for both British and Hessian soldiers within the broader history of the British Empire during the American War for Independence in the 1770s, and beyond. Scribner examines soldiers' experiences of being sent across the dangerous Atlantic Ocean to fight in the treacherous landscapes filled with environmental hardships. The monograph starts with how soldiers experienced and recreated in varying terrain, flora, fauna, and extreme weather of North America. Then, Scribner compares how these environmental factors resulted in many cases of mental diseases and suicides in the later chapters.

Scribner's early chapters build upon his argument of the physical strain of the environment, assembled with firsthand accounts from the foreign troops. These soldiers were described as unprepared physically and mentally for the conditions they encountered in America because they came from foreign places and were unfamiliar with undeveloped landscapes. Soldiers struggled to navigate through dense forests, swamps, mountains, and dangerous waterways, which slowed supply chains, communication, and hindered troop movement. This was compounded by wild flora and fauna, like poisonous plants, and animals such as rattlesnakes, alligators, and mosquitoes, which created a place of endless hazards for troops navigating the region. This was further illustrated by two British soldiers, one of whom awoke one morning to find a snake at his feet, and another who was bitten and succumbed to the poison. The last environmental hazard Scribner emphasized was how the American climate contributed to additional despair among the troops. North America was characterized by vast climate differences, ranging from freezing winters of the north to the sweltering heat of the southern colonies. The extreme northern colonies, with their relentless snowstorms, isolated many during the winters. The words of one Hessian surgeon captured the severity of the cold

weather, as he "was in danger of losing [his] nose and ears" (90). On the other side of the colonies, soldiers faced the opposite problem, enduring the punishing heat and dryness of the South. That even one Hessian soldier in Florida compared the unbearable heat to hell itself, writing that "Satan and all his angels should be banished to this place" (90). Scribner's analysis of the environment demonstrates that the harsh physical terrain, threatening wildlife, and climate were significant factors that caused immense physical misery.

The crucial part of Scribner's argument of environmental suffering appears in his examination of foreign soldiers' mental health and cases of suicide. His description of the environment's psychological consequences provides the strongest evidence in support of his overall argument. Particularly, the multiple studies of the mental disease of "melancholy" or "self-death" spread across different regions support his argument (113). Scribner describes multiple drownings, shootings, and self-inflicted wounds among Hessians and British men unable to endure the extreme environmental conditions. For instance, in the isolating Canadian winters, several members of the 43rd Regiment committed suicide, including a corporal from the 22nd Regiment. Perhaps one of the most shocking incidents described occurred in New York City, where "a Hessian soldier led his wife and children out of the city and into the bushes. There he shot all three and then drowned himself in the North River" (126). Through these examples, Scribner shows that environmental suffering did not just hurt soldiers physically but also broke them down mentally.

Overall, Scribner's book demonstrates how the hostile American environment affected foreign combatants. Scribner shifts the focus away from glorifying narratives of the American War for Independence to a topic that is not well-known in the American history of foreign combatants' experiences. This was done by the different cases of emphasizing the difficult terrain, intense weather, flora, fauna, and mental health. Such challenges of navigating through landscapes caused both physical and psychological suffering that led some soldiers to commit suicide. Scribner's work ultimately demonstrates that environmental challenges influenced the American War for Independence.

Grant A. Balao

***A History of Asian American Theatre.* By Esther Kim Lee. Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 2011. ix, 264 pp. Illustrations. Appendix. Bibliography. Index. \$29.99, paperback.**

In *A History of Asian American Theatre*, Esther Kim Lee provides readers with an overview of Asian American theatre. Her book shines much-needed light on this area of history. It contains an engaging narrative, reliable and well-researched sources, and multiple perspectives on the subject. Readers will have no trouble understanding that history. *A History of Asian American Theatre* serves as a useful text when exploring the multiculturalism of the United States and the way Asian Americans, as well as other cultures, are represented in theatre.

A History of Asian American Theatre contains an introduction, nine chapters, and is partitioned into three waves of the development of Asian American Theatre. It is organized chronologically, beginning with the first wave in the 1960s-1970s, marked by the creation of organizations that sought to improve conditions for Asian Americans in theatre, such as the East West Players from Los Angeles and the Oriental Actors of America from New York City. The second wave in the 1980s is characterized by the growth and success of Asian American actors and playwrights in the industry, such as B.D. Wong and David Henry Hwang. The third wave in the 1990s and 2000s is characterized by interculturalism and multiculturalism in the Asian American theatre industry and identity politics.

Lee shows that as the public shifted away from fascination with the 'orient' due to the Vietnam War, and increasing anti-Asian sentiment in the United States, Asian American actors faced obstacles such as unemployment and rejection from roles for being either 'too Asian' or 'not Asian enough.' For example, the actor Makoto Iwamatsu faced constant rejection because of his Asian appearance, even though he had extensive training from his performing arts theater. When he auditioned for a role in the film *Rashomon*, the director complimented him on his reading but turned him down for the role because he was too Asian and would stand out from the other 'Asian' actors, who were White actors in yellowface (24-25).

In the second wave of Asian American theatre in the 1980s, Asian American actors, playwrights, and activists made further progress and achieved greater success in the industry. Lee elaborates and

gives examples of actors who made an impact on theatre. For example, Nobuko Miyamoto, a second-generation Japanese American, acted in roles that broke out of categorizing Asian Americans into stereotypes. She performed in major Broadway roles such as *The King and I*, *Flower Drum Song*, and *West Side Story*. She was also an activist who fought against racism and worked to better her community.

The second-wave playwrights were also much more successful than their predecessors in the first wave. Lee states that although many works by Asian American playwrights were left unseen, a few caught the attention of mainstream theatre because of improvements in creativity and craftsmanship (124). For example, playwright David Henry Hwang and his famous play, *M. Butterfly*, drew major names in the industry. It was directed by John Dexter, considered one of the best directors at the time, and premiered at the National Theatre in Washington D.C. (129).

The third and final wave of Asian American Theatre in the 1990s is where Asian Americans, now successful, debated how to be more expansive. Lee elaborates that as the scene changed to be more inclusive and diverse; playwrights returned to the question their predecessors faced: "How Asian American does a play have to be for it to still be an Asian American work?" She states that the paradigm shift led to the answer: "Asian Americanness is not required and is only incidental" (203). For example, playwright Diana Son found great success with her play *Stop Kiss*, which featured Sandra Oh, a Canadian-born Korean American actress. According to Lee, Oh was not chosen because she was Asian American; she was chosen because Son believed her to be the best fit for the role (202).

For those who want to learn more about the history of Asian American theatre, this book serves as an approachable means of doing so. Lee uses clear prose and avoids technical language, methodologies, or perspectives that would make it difficult for non-historians to read. While there are several other sources published on Asian American history, *A History of Asian American Theatre* should be considered one of the most valuable for offering a different perspective.

Robert Becerra

***Disunion Among Ourselves: The Perilous Politics of the American Revolution.* By Eli Merritt. Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 2023. 456 pp. Notes. Index. Figures. Hard Bound MSRP \$39.95 & Paperback MSRP \$32.95.**

The American Revolution is often remembered as a simple narrative of thirteen united colonies joined together in a common goal to cast away British tyranny. The reality of the matter was that it was more complex and messier throughout. Tensions constantly arose, resulting in the possibility of disunion. Some colonists did not naturally see themselves as single people, nor was independence inevitable. Unity was generally manufactured, and the idea of rebelling was stoked through various methods. Historians have often debated the factors that ultimately held the colonies together and allowed them to imagine themselves as a unified nation. Understanding these processes not only sheds light on how Americans came to act collectively during the Revolution but also highlights the limits and exclusions of early nation-building.

The Revolution's political history, often celebrated as a march towards order, was anything but that; there were constant negotiations and uneasy compromises. Merritt argues that the Continental Congresses and other assemblies were arenas of deep ideological and regional conflict that constantly put strain on the union. Furthermore, the delegates' survival as a unified body and the colonies' endurance as a coalition depended heavily on their willingness to bend. Debates over basic questions, such as where to meet, began to show how fragile this was. As the delegates gathered to tackle the issue of the Coercive Acts, they met at Philadelphia City Hall on the first day rather than Carpenters' Hall, which displayed a portrait of King George III. As deliberations began on what the next plan of action was going to be related to how to respond to the acts, some representatives were vocal on finding a neutral space. Eventually, after much deliberation, the delegates decided to hold all future days of meeting at Carpenters' Hall, marking one of many instances that showcased that unity was achieved through careful compromise (29-30).

Economic interests further complicated the quest for unity. The proposed non-exportation agreements, designed to pressure Britain through collective economic resistance after the Coercive Acts, met fierce opposition from Virginia and South Carolina, whose economies relied heavily on export crops. For Virginia,

the restriction on tobacco would have been disastrous, as the Virginia Convention in Williamsburg explained that to avoid heavy injury against Britain and make sure the crop would not go to waste, they noted that "people...have rendered it necessary to restrain you in this article of non-exportation," (53). By bringing about this case, Virginia was able to briefly postpone any non-exportation agreements, as noted with the issue regarding South Carolina. The colony, whose main income was rice and indigo, also found that an embargo would be harmful and begged for an exception, which in turn led to a seven-day walkout due to no compromise at first (71). It was not until October 18th and fully adopted on October 20th that a compromise was made, which noted "in the event of Parliament did not repeal the Coercive Acts by September 10, 1775, the thirteen colonies would enact full-scale nonexportation to all ports in the British empire, 'except rice to Europe,'" (72). Such negotiations underscored that the Revolution's unity was not born of principle but necessity. Through these uneasy compromises, colonial leaders managed to preserve a sense of cohesion whilst embedding fragility into the foundations that would continue to shape American politics long after independence.

While Merritt's *Disunion* reframes the revolution as a story of political fragility and compromise, his analysis reads more like a historical narrative novel that focuses mainly on the Founding Fathers themselves without much regard to other factors, such as women, the environment, and even the issues regarding slavery. Furthermore, although impressive that he uses just primary sources for his analysis, it would have been beneficial for him to engage more with historical debates past the introductory chapter to round the novel out more. Despite that, his argument does bring about further questions for analysis on how the nation's unity functions through constant compromises and invites scholars to think about political factors beyond congressional debates into more practical applications of day-to-day life.

Emily Anne Branecki

***Becoming Turkish: Nationalist Reforms and Cultural Negotiations in Early Republican Turkey, 1923-1945.* By Hale Yilmaz. New York: Syracuse University Press, 2013. vii, 328 pp. Contents. List of Illustrations. Acknowledgments. A Note on Spelling and Pronunciation. Notes. References. Photographs. \$35.00, paperback.**

Hale Yilmaz discusses the nationalization process and reforms of Republican Turkey from 1923 to 1945. The collapse of the Ottoman Empire after World War I paved the way for the proclamation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923. Under the rule of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Republican Turkey enforced a series of reforms that aimed to nationalize, modernize, and secularize the state. These reforms were intended to reconstruct Turkish citizens through the regulation of clothing, language, and public celebrations. However, Yilmaz argues that the nationalization of Turkey was not purely a top-down effort, and that local populations adapted to and resisted these reforms in ways that reveal a more complex process of nation-building. *Becoming Turkish* offers a nuanced case study of how nationalism is constructed through both coercion and everyday participation.

Yilmaz situates her work within the broader historiography of nationalism and state formation, emphasizing the cultural and social dimensions of reform rather than purely political narratives. Emphasis is placed on the headwear of Turkish citizens. Reforms aimed at banning the traditional fez hat and replacing it with the modern, European-style hat (22). The republic also strongly encouraged the unveiling of women, to reflect the secularization and modernization of Turkey and the citizens who represent it. While some embraced Western-style clothing, others resisted through both direct and indirect means. Similarly, language reforms intended to 'purify' Turkish were unevenly adopted, revealing the limits of state power in reshaping deeply embedded cultural practices. These examples illustrate that national identity was not simply dictated but actively constructed through negotiation.

Yilmaz also highlights the role of surveillance and state discipline in enforcing the newly crafted nationalist ideals. The state relied on both local officials and ordinary citizens to report instances of non-compliance, giving birth to a culture of observation and scrutiny (73). This system blurred the line between state authority and popular participation. At the same time, the variability of reform adaptation reflects

Yilmaz's argument that state building, and power in general, is a negotiated and interactive process. This dependence on the populace exposed the limits of state authority, illustrating how local resistance often disrupted the consistent realization of these reforms.

Methodologically, *Becoming Turkish* reflects a cultural and social historical approach. Focusing on state construction on a cultural level, while also highlighting the power negotiations between the state and individuals, Yilmaz succeeds in challenging more traditional historical narratives that prioritize political analysis, instead demonstrating that national identity is actively shaped through everyday interactions between citizens and the state (13). Identity formation occurs at the intersection of policy and practice. Therefore, any work of nationalist history that focuses purely on top-down policies overlooks this crucial aspect of state-building and the formation of collective identity. Yilmaz's use of a diverse set of primary sources strengthens her argument by grounding abstract concepts of nationalism in concrete examples.

Yilmaz also employs a detailed gender analysis within the context of Turkish state-building. The emphasis on unveiling women, encouraging their visibility within the public domain, and expanding education opportunities demonstrates the state's attempt at constructing a modern and Western-oriented society. While these reforms were framed as emancipatory and progressive by the state, Yilmaz shows that their implementation was uneven and often dependent on local context. Some women refused to leave their houses for years or were kept from leaving by the men in their family, out of protest against the new expectation of unveiling in public (122). Despite the state's granting of more rights to women, these reforms were not intended to promote gender emancipation. Yilmaz demonstrates how the Turkish Republic's reforms aimed at reconstructing traditional gender roles not for the sake of women's rights, but for the advancement of Turkish society in the eyes of the Western world (137).

Overall, *Becoming Turkish* is an insightful study of how national identity and state construction are implemented through both state intervention and the everyday negotiations of ordinary citizens. Yilmaz convincingly demonstrates that the making of modern Turkey was not solely the result of top-down reforms, but rather a dynamic process shaped between the government and the masses. Through an analysis of cultural practices and local experiences, the book contributes

significantly to both studies of nationalism and of early Republican Turkish history.

Ethan J. Chapman

***Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939.* By Lizabeth Cohen. 2nd Ed. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2014. Pp. ix, 526. Preface. Illustrations. Maps. Plates. Tables. Acknowledgements. Notes. Index. \$43.75, paperback.**

Lizabeth Cohen argues that the political and collective responses made by the people are often overlooked when celebrating the overcoming of the economic hardships during the Great Depression (2). She seeks to prove how the specific actions of Chicago's interwar era factory workers led to major improvements for the working-class Americans. She claims that these actions, like the overcoming of traditional ethnic ties and partaking in the mass consumer culture, began with a shift in attitude. While the attitude of the working class is the driving force for political change, it could be hard to accept its interpretations of the data utilized. This book is a nice contribution for scholars interested in American labor organization, but not for those led to believe that it is about New Deal programs, as alluded to in the title.

The book begins with the great strike waves of 1919 and evolves into an analysis of ideological shifts in political involvement. In the first chapter, Cohen argues that the industrial workers' decision to participate in the great strike waves of 1919 fulfilled an "impressive demonstration of workers' commitment" to see political change despite its initial failures in the progress of unionization (51). In her next chapter, Cohen argues that industrial workers of diverse ethnic communities had to make decisions that went against their traditional ethnic institutions in order to gain greater benefits, like choosing to join an employer's public benefit program rather than be insured by their ethnic benefit society (56). Further in the book, she analyzes the importance of industrial workers' indulgence in motion pictures, despite the attempt of ethnic leaders to hold onto tradition and keep mainstream American culture out of their institutions (96,120). By the end of the book, she emphasizes how the Chicago workers acted on shifting to a welfare state and began to participate more in

national politics after the Great Depression exposed the failures of the welfare capitalist employers (289).

A major strength of the book rests in the consistency of human agency. Cohen offers plenty of ways for her reader to get a glimpse of the working-class Chicagoans. For example, when Cohen references the Italian industrial workers breaking away from the traditional ties of the Catholic church and the adaptation into a more homogenous community, she includes an image and caption on plate twelve to depict the scene of the individuals who participated in the village feast that the Catholic church disapproved (93). She also challenges historians' tendencies to generalize the events of the Great Depression, with the mission of bringing personal stories into how it "materially and emotionally devastated Chicago workers and their families" (214).

While Cohen seeks to expose the shift in attitude of the working class, she is limited to understanding it mostly through data. In her introduction, she acknowledges the fact that attitudes of nonelites are hard to document. She must "tease out," or infer, what the attitude of the workers is by analyzing the patterns of their banking, leisure, and consumer activity (8). A scholar would understand that the working class is not likely to have free time to document their attitudes the way that the elite would have more time to do, however, the nature of this study leaves much of the content open to the interpretation of the historian.

Cohen encapsulates a Marxist approach as she centers much of her book around the ethnic laborers stepping away from their elite community leaders to collectively gain from their industrial unions. Marx himself believes that there needs to be an abolition of countries and nations to experience the benefits of communism. She explains in her second chapter how the working-class began to seek political resolution by acting together from different ethnic communities, now that they shared similar experiences and shared a common language. By joining together as fellow workers, despite their community ties, they could overcome class barriers so that "workers and bosses could easily belong to the same fraternal order and at times even the same lodge" (96).

Cohen excels at shifting the narrative from elite policy makers and community members to the empowerment of the Chicago factory workers during the interwar era. Rather than celebrating the policies of the

New Deal, as one may have been led to believe when picking up this book, it celebrates the victories of the American working class.

Alyssa Noel Crawford

***Native Hoops: The Rise of American Indian Basketball, 1895-1970.* By Wade Davies. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2020. 1, 406 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$29.95, paperback.**

Wade Davies writes *Native Hoops* to show how basketball is far more than a game to Native athletes. It is about “competing for your family, your tribe, and Natives everywhere” (1). Davies, professor of Native American Studies at the University of Montana, sets out to explain how and why basketball became a defining feature of Native American community life across the twentieth century. Davies traces the sport’s origins in the federal boarding school system, where athletic programs were designed to instill Euro-American discipline and norms in Native students. School administrators believed that Native basketball would instill American values in players who “were thus learning to think, be assertive, and take direction like model American students” (78). What they did not anticipate was that Native students would use the sport for their own purposes. Many students, men and women alike, used basketball “as a refuge inside institutional walls and as a means to carve out a better existence for themselves” (66). Basketball helped build community for students in boarding schools and helped by “sugar coating the Indian school’s bitter pills during the 1920s and 1930s” (71). These students then continued with this community by bringing the sport back to reservation life, long after their school days were over.

The book moves chronologically from the boarding school era through reservation communities, women’s basketball, barnstorming, and beyond. Davies highlights that soon after students established success in the sport, the Indian schools found themselves in an impossible institutional position, neither recognized as high schools nor as colleges. When governing bodies emerged to oversee both levels of competition, the Indian schools were left out and, “the all-access titles they competed for were being replaced with sanctioned college conference and high school championships that were often inaccessible to them” (161). The establishment of conference ball meant the students found

themselves stymied by the same limbo that also faced Native communities during this time, not allowed to stay rooted in their cultural past, yet not allowed to progress forward in modernity. He points out that the average viewer did not notice the lack of progression of these Native players, as “few American sports fans noticed that the Indian schools were producing scores of talented basketball players every year through mid-century, yet only a handful were transitioning to college rosters” (187). Sports writers compounded this confusion by “commonly referring to Carlisle and Haskell as universities, which they were not,” a misclassification that obscured their status in the minds of fans in the era of burgeoning sports organizations (187).

Davies’ work is at its best when he recounts the foundations of boarding schools and their influence on ‘Indian Ball’, describing how Native students used a sport introduced to assimilate them and turned it into a way to maintain community ties and cultural identity. The book is less successful when he moves toward broader claims about why Native peoples connected so deeply to the game. Davies argues that “all the major team sports that non-Natives introduced structurally paralleled indigenous sports to a high degree in that they emphasized running, physical endurance, dexterity, quick thought, and teamwork” (12). This grates on his stronger argument that Native students claimed basketball through deliberate community building and resistance, not because the sport came naturally to them. Davies also largely sidesteps the absence of Carlisle’s infamous athletics program in the early days of the Native sport and leaves out the undue influence of Glenn “Pop” Warner, who ran Carlisle’s athletics program. Warner’s focus on football at Carlisle left no room to support an equally strong basketball program, and Davies does not address what Warner’s dominance of the athletics program meant for basketball at Carlisle. However, Davies focused on the success of the women, perhaps explained by the fact that Warner had no interest in it.

Davies is successful in providing an encyclopedic knowledge of the sport, tracing how basketball moved from boarding schools, followed Native soldiers home from World War I and spread through the barnstorming era into reservation life. The book makes a convincing case that Native students took a tool intended for assimilation and made it their own for decades to come. For anyone studying Indigenous life, boarding

schools, or American sports history, this book is an excellent resource.

Amy Davey

***When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda.* By Mahmood Mamdani. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001. 1, 364 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$15.37, ebook.**

Books on genocide often ask how such violence could happen at all. In *When Victims Become Killers*, Mahmood Mamdani asks a harder and more useful question: How does mass killing come to seem politically reasonable? He answers that the 1994 Rwandan genocide cannot be understood as an eruption of ancient tribal hatred. It must be traced to a colonial history that transformed social differences into racial hierarchy and, later, into political violence. As Mamdani puts it, his aim is “to show how the unthinkable becomes thinkable” (18).

Mamdani’s central argument is that Belgian colonial rule hardened the historically more flexible categories of Hutu and Tutsi into fixed racial identities, assigning them unequal status and political meaning. Those categories did not disappear with independence. They were revised and weaponized by postcolonial regimes. For Mamdani, genocide did not emerge from timeless ethnic hostility, but from modern forms of state power, shaped further by the refugee crises, civil war, and an increasingly exclusionary nationalism.

The book is less a narrative history than a structural analysis of how political identities are made and mobilized. Drawing on postcolonial theory, political history, colonial archives, government records, sociological studies, and oral testimony, Mamdani reconstructs the long historical process that made mass violence possible. He withholds from dramatizing individual suffering and instead focuses on exposing the political logic that turned administrative categories into instruments of destruction. That emphasis gives the book unusual explanatory power, especially for readers interested in the relationship between colonial rule and modern genocide.

In this reader’s opinion, the book’s most important contribution is its analysis of victimhood as a political weapon. Mamdani shows how postcolonial leaders cast Tutsi as alien intruders and an “enemy race,”

allowing mass violence to be framed as self-defense rather than aggression. In this respect, the book pairs especially well with Jean Hatzfeld’s *Machete Season*. Where Hatzfeld captures the habits and mental world of ordinary perpetrators, Mamdani explains the deeper historical and political conditions that made those actions imaginable. Together, the two works illuminate both the mentality and the machinery of genocide.

Mamdani crafted an incredibly well-written monograph, but his prose can be dense, and his theoretical framework demands patient reading. His focus on long-term structures sometimes narrows the space given to individual agency and the emotional reality of events on the ground. Readers seeking a deeply personal or narrative-driven account may find the study intellectually compelling but emotionally distant. Even so, those limitations are bound up with the book’s purpose. Mamdani is not trying to recreate the horror of genocide scene by scene; he is trying to explain how a political order makes such horror conceivable.

That achievement is what makes *When Victims Become Killers* so valuable. More than two decades after its publication, it remains one of the most important works on the Rwandan genocide and a major contribution to genocide studies more broadly. Its extensive notes and bibliography also make it especially useful for students and scholars who want to pursue the subject further. The book challenges readers to consider how political identities are formed and how easily they can be turned toward violence. It also serves as a reminder that genocide is the outcome of decisions and systems that develop over time. This is not the most accessible book on Rwanda, but it is among the most incisive. For readers willing to meet its demands, Mamdani offers a compelling explanation of how genocide is constructed. In revealing how genocide takes shape, he shows that it starts long before the killing begins.

James Dickmann

***Horses in Society: A Story of Animal Breeding and Marketing Culture, 1800-1920.* By Margaret E. Derry. University of Toronto Press, 2006. 304 pp. Illustrations. Notes. Index. \$46.50, digital.**

Horses in Society: A Story of Animal Breeding and Marketing Culture, 1800-1920, is a history book written by Margaret E. Derry, published by the University of Toronto. Margaret is a history professor

at the University of Guelph in Ontario. She is also a faculty member in the Animal and Poultry Science department. She has published multiple books on animal behavior, regional differences between species of birds, and the history of animal breeding. She has done extensive research on ungulate breeding regarding cattle and horses before the Industrial Revolution. *Horses in Society* focuses on the importance of the horse before the engine. It is an overview of the horse production in Canada, United States, and Britain.

The book has four sections, with the first being about the process behind horse breeding. Derry separates horses into three separate categories: the standard light horse for riding, racing, and purebred systems, the heavy horse for labor such as pulling and combat, and the “general-purpose, agricultural” farm horse. The second section addresses the horse market for the armies of the United States, Britain, and Canada. Both the United States’ and Canada’s horse operations were affected by the war in Europe, with the transatlantic shipping of horses being disrupted. With this disruption, unique breeds were able to develop with the little access they had to European breeds. Section three provides a deeper dive into the history of horse breeding between the three countries. In the order from Britain to Canada, Derry gives the reader a timeline of the purebred breeding theory and how it was passed down. As an animal advocate, Derry also pulls attention to the ethics of purebred breeding and its controversial history. With the purebred theory, Derry recalls how important the heredity of the horse was in order what the British defined as a purebred. Many horse doctors disagreed over what would count as a deliberating defect, or as a refining trait unique to the breed. The hereditary background of these horses does not come from nature but instead evolves from the man-made tasks they have been required to perform over time. Eventually this predicament would be properly addressed in various humanitarian movements, and the reporting on what is truly hereditary and what is a deformity would become more agreed upon, with those same reports crossing the same transatlantic route the horses were being shipped to. In the United States, certain regulations were produced in “...attempts to control fraudulent activity and market share”, as per the chapter name. The same had begun in Canada. However, the United States regulations did not solely enforce on the stud horse as it had been in Britain. In America, the regulation was enforced on

business owners instead in order to prevent fraudulence and faulty offspring.

The fourth and final section of the book discusses the dynamics between horses and society before and during the Industrial Revolution. With the horse industry exploding during the 1880s, horse ownership went from single owners to joint ownership, and from then on, the introduction to businesses dedicated to the buying and selling of horses. As Derry had established, a battle of ethics was on the rise for these animals as well during this time. The horse had begun to be viewed as an object used for a selling point rather than a living being. Horses produced in poor conditions from poor sires were being exorbitated and peddled to farmers. The horse market gradually recovered when farmers took ownership of these businesses instead.

Overall, Derry provides the reader with a comprehensive timeline of horse breeding and the evolution of the dynamic between the horse and society right before the Industrial Revolution. It is an important insight on both the horses and commentary on society during this era, making it a valuable read for those interested in America’s economic development before the Industrial Revolution.

Lee Donati-Bunch

***Freedom’s Orator: Mario Savio and the Radical Legacy of the 1960s.* Robert Cohen (factual). New York: Oxford University Press, 2009. 1, 512 pp. Notes. Index. Photographs. Paperback. \$34.95.**

Robert Cohen analyzed Mario Savio, the face of Berkeley’s Free Speech Movement in 1964. The book is a biography of Savio, and it describes his background, his motivations, and his presence in different areas. Cohen wrote of Savio’s experiences in Mexico and the Freedom Summer in Mississippi, along with his impact on Berkeley during the Free Speech Movement. *Freedom’s Orator* also explains how Savio emerged as a speaker and key player for the Free Speech Movement. Savio’s importance is highlighted in *Freedom’s Orator*. While this book is a biography of Savio, it can be interpreted as political and cultural history, as well as theory. The importance of Savio is laid out chronologically.

Cohen’s book runs chronologically. The first part of *Freedom’s Orator* starts with Savio’s backstory.

His family was made up of working-class Italian immigrants, and they resided in New York. Cohen uses parts of Savio's unpublished memoir and describes Savio's Catholic upbringing and his drive for learning. Savio's motivations are explained in the later chapters of the first part of *Freedom's Orator*. Savio traveled to Mexico to help the people and was able to witness firsthand the effects of American colonialism and imperialism. Later, Savio helped African Americans register to vote during Freedom Summer in 1964. There, Savio experienced violence by Klan members and was later arrested. Cohen uses these examples to analyze Savio's evolution in political thought and motivation.

Cohen's historical sources come from different areas. He writes about how he met Savio in the 1980s for the Free Speech Movement's twentieth anniversary. From there, Cohen secured an interview with Savio. Cohen uses quotes from Savio, as well as snippets of Savio's unpublished memoir. Quotes from other Free Speech Movement members are also utilized. Other significant members of the Free Speech Movement include Jack Weinberg and Jackie Goldberg. Some readers may feel dismayed that these two are not more involved, but since this book is a biography about Savio, these two do not overstay their welcome, and they help Cohen connect how Savio was seen by others involved with the movement.

The latter parts of the book include the Free Speech Movement itself and the different events that took place in 1964. Savio's speeches are analyzed on how they motivated their listeners, but also their substance. Later, Savio's personal life and FBI investigations on Savio show how the movement floundered. Cohen attempts to show Savio and the Free Speech Movement's detractors as much as its supporters in the book. For some readers, if they want to know more about other members of the Free Speech Movement or are more into the movement rather than Savio's beliefs and motivations, then Cohen's other books may be the correct move.

Some might feel like this book is dense, as it is a little over five hundred pages, but for any reader who wants to know more about the FSM, its causes, and how it came to be, then *Freedom's Orator: Mario Savio and the Radical Legacy of the 1960s* is for you. Cohen makes the story of Mario Savio and the Free Speech Movement engaging and thoughtful. This book is thoughtful due to Savio's growth as a leader and an orator, but also his motivations in how he became who

he is. While long, *Freedom's Orator* is very in-depth on Mario Savio. Cohen analyzes Mario Savio's upbringing and his early experiences to explain how Savio became such a widely respected figure for the Free Speech Movement. His actions during the movement are explained by how he was raised, how he viewed the world, and how he interacted with others. The latter half of the book looks at his later life, but it still shows how consistent Savio was and how he may be seen as lesser-known today in student activist circles.

Mikayla J. Gonzales

The Two Revolutions: A History of the Transgender Internet. By Avery Dame-Griff. New York: New York University Press, 2023. 1, 272 pp. Acknowledgments. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. \$32.00, paperback.

Avery Dame-Griff discusses the interrelationship between the propagation of the Internet and the formulation of the transgender movement from the 1980s to the present. The two revolutions that the author refers to regard the boom of the internet from a technological, social, and political sphere, as it paralleled the similar revolution of a modern transgender movement that metastasized through extensive digital communications, all of which were sophisticated alongside the rapid technological advancement of the internet. Efforts in the 1980s to garner a sense of community between a burgeoning population of individuals who sought a unified identity to describe the experiences of those who would eventually identify as transgender. A feat of archival research and queer media archeology, Dame-Griff reconstructs digital communications between a nascent transgender community that spans decades, until it shapes into the largely online presence of trans networks existing today.

A timeline of the digital era forms throughout the book. Beginning from the 1980s Bulletin Board System (BBS), the author traces the digitization of preexisting queer print media, ranging from political cartoons, short-form fandom fiction, and political newsletters and argues that these archaic chatrooms widened the gap of access to knowledge regarding reproduced content (54). As the methods of accessing the Internet became more accessible and the computer became domesticated in the American home, gender community spaces were forged through digital communication platforms such as America Online (AOL)

in the 1990s, as explored in Chapter 2. Other aspects of the Internet's ties to gender are discussed, among them the argument that the birth of "cisgender" as a term to separate trans Internet users on defunct site UseNet from the majority of people who have no incongruence in their gender identity has explicit political ties, as it allowed trans users to forge collective experiences over trying to appease or radically dismantle existing gender hierarchies reinforced by cisgender people (82). Dame-Griff concludes that discourse over transgender people that we contemporarily attribute to sites such as Facebook or Twitter can trace its origin to downed sites like UseNet. Minimal corporate oversight of the early World Wide Web allowed for transgender Internet denizens to flourish in number, though it was often through the constraint of being "good digital citizens," as early transgender activism was based upon the desire to fit within cisgender structures in a decades-long struggle to move past respectability politics (141).

Sporadically, *The Two Revolutions* reflects on the difficulties raised on presenting a holistic perspective of the transgender community through the early internet age, as access to the internet was divided along explicit class and implicit racial boundaries. For that reason, the early internet movement of transgender organizations was effectively 'whitewashed'. There is also the issue of who or what decides to archive internet activities, especially those of queer users and queer content, though platforms such as the Internet Archive or Dame-Griff's own Queer Digital History Project highlight a positive direction. Capital continues to play a pivotal role in the leniency towards LGBTQ content on a given platform. As Dame-Griff explores, this has much to do with the capitalist implications of corporate Internet ownership that derive decisions about marginalized visibility off the economic convenience of a given social platform (57). This push-and-pull of corporate unease in platforming queer topics and, by extension, queer users, has a history that stems as far back as the dawn of the World Wide Web.

The Two Revolutions is a good book for scholars with familiarity with Internet history, offering a concise perspective of Internet communication history through a select sample of users. It works in concert as a fantastic work of transgender history, though the state of digital archival material has made it difficult to provide a full picture of transgender and transvestite online activities. Equal parts a history of the Internet and a social history of transgender activism,

The Two Revolutions centers a long-neglected sector of media history and queer history, sparking the conversation of the much-needed responsibility of effectively archiving the transgender Internet. As *The Two Revolution* shows, modern refuges of the transgender community are largely occupied by trans individuals on applications (apps) such as Instagram, Twitter, and Tumblr. The major concern this poses, as Dame-Griff concludes, is the inconsistency of archiving the Internet, where much of trans history seems to be living on borrowed time.

Ciaran G. Henderson

***From the Bullet to the Ballot: The Illinois Chapter of the Black Panther Party and Racial Coalition Politics in Chicago.* By Jakobi Williams. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013. Pp. xvi, 285. Illustrations, maps, figures, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95, paper.**

In *From the Bullet to the Ballot*, author Jakobi Williams sets out to place the Illinois Black Panther Party (ILBPP) and its leader, Fred Hampton, in the context of the long Civil Rights movement and, in particular, against the background of the Civil Rights movement in Chicago before the formation of the ILBPP and Hampton's Rainbow Coalition. The title of the book's introduction sets the tone for the rest of the book: "The Illinois Chapter of the Black Panther Party Speaks for Itself." From the first page through the last, Williams sticks to his promise to lift the voices of those living members of the ILBPP who were on the forefront of the fight alongside Hampton. Centering those voices is what gives this book a special place in the historiography of the national Black Panther Party, the Black Power movement, and the Civil Rights movement as a whole.

Throughout the book, Williams focuses his attention on the ground up organizing efforts of Chicagoans, particularly those efforts led by students and young people in Richard Daley's Chicago (2). Starting with an analysis of the political climate in Chicago from 1900 on, Williams discusses the effects of racially restrictive covenants, the 1919 Chicago race riot, the jointly led political organizing efforts of Black churches and saloons, and how Black Chicagoans helped to build establishment Democratic organization that would eventually lift Richard J. Daley into power as mayor (16-28). Williams' comparison of the Illinois

Black Panther Party with the national BPP highlights the ways that the leaders of the two groups influenced each other, even though Hampton was a much younger man than the Oakland-based leaders Bobby Seale, Huey P. Newton, and Eldridge Cleaver. While the ILBPP modeled itself closely on the national BPP in efforts like combating police brutality and caring for the basic needs of Black Chicagoans, Hampton's skills at coalition building, culminating in the ILBPP-led Rainbow Coalition, became the model for other chapters (92-98). Hampton's work as a teenaged organizer in efforts to desegregate public recreation sites and elevate social justice as a primary goal often put him in the sights of school administrators, but they also were an excellent foundation for training him to be the leader the ILBPP would need under the Daley administration in Chicago (55-56).

One of the highlights of Williams' work is the way he expands the standard story of the ILBPP, which typically centers around its short-lived coalition-building and ends abruptly with the state-sanctioned assassination of its young leader, Fred Hampton. Since Hampton was only twenty-one years old at the time of his killing, not much scholarly work has been spent on his early life. Williams places Hampton's leadership of the ILBPP and his sudden death in the broader context of his whole life, especially his early work as an informal organizer of several protests while in high school. Williams also spends time discussing the history of the Civil Rights movement in Chicago as prelude to the formation of the ILBPP, and carries its legacy of broad coalition building into the future, highlighting the successful campaign of Chicago's first African American mayor, Harold Washington, as well as how the Rainbow Coalition shaped the politics of America's first African American president, Barack Obama.

From the Bullet to the Ballot is a valuable addition to the library of anyone who is looking to go beyond the standard narrative of the Civil Rights and Black Power movements. Williams prioritizes first-hand accounts of the events and topics he discusses, and by doing so he makes a valuable contribution to the historiography of the long Civil Rights movement.

Jerry L. Kennedy

***Drunk on Genocide: Alcohol and Mass Murder in Nazi Germany.* By Edward B. Westermann. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2021. xii, 294 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$32.95, hardbound.**

The Holocaust was the result of the mass mobilization of the German people against Jews, communists, gays, and many other minority groups that Aryan supremacists deemed a threat. While scholars such as Christopher Browning and Daniel Goldhagen have provided their own insights into the motivations of the perpetrators, Westermann balances both the social and cultural arguments they bring to great effect. Somewhat of a misnomer, *Drunk on Genocide* is about masculinity within the German armed forces in Eastern Europe and its part in making the deaths of millions not only feasible, but commemorative. Through photos, letters, records, and the efforts of fellow scholars, Westermann shows how masculinity, drinking, sexual violence, and mass killing intertwined until the perpetrators of the Holocaust became literally and metaphorically *Drunk on Genocide*.

The connection between masculinity and drinking is key to understanding how countless soldiers freely participated in the Holocaust. Westermann spends the first chapter on the setting of the German tavern in rallying the National Socialist party, as well as the masculine aspects of yelling, drinking, and fighting that occurred. While women participated in the Nazi party, the taverns where the fascist movement germinated were the domain of men, wherein a performative masculinity formed amidst drinking competitions, shouting matches, and brawls. From coming-of-age drinks in which boys became men, to farewell drinks before departing to war, alcohol became increasingly important, reaching apotheosis during the Third Reich. When loyal Nazis, German army conscripts, and police regiments participated in mass killings, they were given alcohol, sometimes before, often after, and in increasing amounts as their killings continued. As the killings continued, the nature of violence perpetrated would transform drunken executions into willful ritual festivities.

There is a culture of ritual violence through which alcohol is commonly involved throughout the subjects that Westermann covers. The keeping of trophies, such as photos of victims by German executioners, or the staging of hunts with rewards of alcohol, demonstrates the celebration and genuine fun

that the persecutors made of their situation. Young SS troops and middle-aged police regiments leaned on power dynamics, keeping count of their kills, sexual violence, as well as the growing extremeness of said acts. These actions were not merely the result of too much liquor but were built upon a bedrock of camaraderie between competing male colleagues. Westermann argues that “Braggadocio and shared lewd language, like the act of communal drinking, was an element for building group identity and camaraderie... emphasizing one’s virility” (89). Forced orgies and drinking parties, even as the outcome of the war became clear, continued. A culture of desensitization had fully set in among participating soldiers, police, and officers. Their drinking and partying were not, as many accounts claimed, a result of the burden of their work, but rather accompanied by it.

Westermann provides, with *Drunk on Genocide*, a look at the horrific festivities that accompanied every step of the Nazi party and its policy of genocide. While he certainly focuses on alcohol as the title suggests, his real focus is on the intoxication of power that the perpetrators felt. These men wielded total control over their victims, taking pleasure in various inhumane acts that cannot be excused by alcoholism, though many perpetrators claimed as much. The figures that Westermann focuses on are not the quietly unwilling ordinary men that Browning portrays, nor are they the violent, distinctly German caricatures that Goldhagen wishes to simplify them into. The perpetrators are the result of cultural norms of alcoholism and societal pressures of masculinity, reinforced by an echo chamber of celebrated murder, sexual violence, and drinking rituals.

Jacob Lee

***Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks.* By Mark David Spence. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. \$22.99, paper.**

Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks examines how the national parks and the conservationist movement reshaped Native American life in the West. Mark David Spence sets out to trace the process that turned these landscapes into protected sites, and his thesis is direct: the preservation of wilderness advanced hand in hand with the dispossession of Native peoples. The book examines three parks, Yellowstone, Glacier, and

Yosemite, and the nineteenth-century ideas about wilderness and conservation that made their creation possible.

Spence first sets the stage with two chapters on the antebellum era and the way Americans came to think about preserving the West’s natural beauty. Drawing on painters, poets, and philosophers, he shows how romanticism shaped the period’s view of nature. Thomas Cole’s paintings are a useful example, since the idea that Native Americans were part of the wilderness fed directly into that romantic vision. Henry David Thoreau’s writing, which Spence closes the section with, is representative of the era’s beliefs about the natural world.

From there, the same pattern repeats across all three parks. In each case the federal government uses treaties to ‘preserve’ the land while ensuring that it, rather than the tribes, benefits from that preservation. At Yellowstone, Spence shows how the government managed treaties with Indian tribes as it expanded westward, and how the Trail of Tears and its death toll exposed just how flexible those treaties had become in the government’s favor. The shift was formalized in the Yellowstone Park Act of 1872, which helped convert treaty land into reservations and placed final authority over western territory in federal hands. Once the parks existed, the government recast Native communities as threats to the landscape and its wildlife, a pretext for removal driven by prejudice. *Ward v. Race Horse* captures the tactic plainly, reiterating how treaty flexibility and the exploitation of agreements were turned to the government’s advantage.

He shows that in Glacier Park, Anglo-Americans were drawn to the park by the chance to see Native people in what looked like their own homeland, by the scenery, and by the prospect of a mining rush in the early twentieth century. The removal of the Blackfeet, and the methods developed to carry it out, became a template that originated at Glacier and spread elsewhere. Spence presses the point when he describes how Director Albright drafted legislation to expand the park eastward on the basis of just twenty members of the Blackfeet tribe.

Yet it is Yosemite that proves his thesis most clearly. Because the Yosemite Indians never signed a treaty with the federal government, they became a singular problem for the National Park Service, and

their case shows that treaties, or their absence, were central to dispossession either way. It is the sharpest illustration in the book of Spence's argument that preservation and removal were never separate projects but a single one.

Spence proves his case through these accumulated examples, and the strength of the book is the consistency of the pattern he uncovers across very different parks. His argument also extends the story Francis Paul Prucha examines in *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians*, the standard history of federal treaties and Indian policy, by showing that the same treaty flexibility Prucha traces across the American government's dealings with Indian tribes is what made the national parks possible. The book's weakness is pacing; readers who do not already have an interest in the parks or in the history of federal treaties may lose momentum in the chapter-by-chapter detail. Even so, *Dispossessing the Wilderness* is a valuable read for anyone interested in the history of the national parks or in the government's long record of treaty-making, and it makes a convincing argument that the country's most celebrated landscapes were preserved at Native expense.

Arthur Marquez Jr.

***Prozac on the Couch: Prescribing Gender in the Era of Wonder Drugs.* By Jonathan Michel Metzl. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003. 1, 275 pp. Notes. Index. Bibliography. Images. \$27.95, paper.**

In *Prozac on the Couch*, Jonathan Metzl discusses the "biological revolution" within the field of psychiatry and the ways that Freudian principles of gender roles are reinforced in this era despite the claim that these ideas were rejected concurrent with the decline of psychotherapy. A psychiatrist as well as professor of sociology, Metzl provides a detailed history of the development of psychiatric drugs, while simultaneously analyzing how these pharmaceuticals were advertised to the public in popular periodicals, as well as discussed among doctors in publications such as the *American Journal of Psychiatry*. Ultimately, he argues that despite the often-referenced decline of the acceptance of Freudian principles in psychology, "wonder drugs" such as Miltown, Valium, and Prozac reflected and reinforced the gendered structure upon which the field of psychology was built.

Metzl consults a variety of sources upon which he builds his argument. Regarding the public advertisements and the ways in which women are targeted, he consults popular print media such as the *Cosmopolitan*, *Newsweek*, and *Science Digest*. Beyond these, he traces more of the technical aspects of developments in psychiatry through the aforementioned *American Journal of Psychiatry* as well as developments/updates in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. Of course, he also references Sigmund Freud's works, primarily "The Uncanny" and "The Unconscious," to establish his point of comparison when making his argument.

This book is broken into six chapters. The first and last chapters serve as the introduction and conclusion respectively, while the four core chapters build upon Metzl's central argument regarding the gendered nature of prescribed psychiatric drugs while also detailing periodical developments in the field of psychology from 1955 to 2002. Chapter two serves as a concise history of the field of psychiatry, from the initial development of tranquilizers as tools to aid in psychotherapy, to drugs rising to become the primary form of treatment in the place of traditional talk therapy. Metzl builds upon his argument here as he notes the sudden absence of men from drug advertisements and the appearance of women as content wives and mothers, illustrating the expected result of the drug's effects (35). Chapter two briefly covers the almost fifty years which are broken apart in subsequent chapters, and introduces the main themes explored in more detail later in the book. This chapter could effectively stand alone and is an excellent source for anyone interested in the history of medicine, psychology, or gender studies.

As for the more detailed chapters, Metzl traces what is referred to as the "biological revolution," which is where the supposed separation from Freud begins. This revolution is best defined as a "shift 'from blaming the mother to blaming the brain,'" and the idea of chemical imbalances rather than a manifestation of one's past becomes more widely accepted as causes of depression, anxiety, etc. (73). It is made clear that although it is tempting to see this as a shift towards relieving mothers of the blame of men's troubles, the advertised prescription of tranquilizers and Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs) target women in a way that assigns guilt for not accomplishing the roles that are assigned to them such as

mother and wife, but also blame women for various social anxieties (75).

Ultimately, *Prozac on the Couch* is a highly informative read that incorporates a variety of academic disciplines and situates them in a historical context. In his conclusion, Metzl illustrates a deep reflection of his own experience as a psychiatrist and calls for others to recognize the potential biases they may have when treating patients, considering the history upon which their profession is built.

Atlas McDermott

***They Were Her Property: White Women as Slave Owners in the American South.* By Stephanie E. Jones-Rogers. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019. pp. xx, 296, Notes. Bibliography. Acknowledgements. Index. \$19.99, paperback.**

Stephanie E. Jones-Rogers discusses the history of the involvement of southern white women in the mechanisms of slavery of the Antebellum South. She also explains the complex economic system that was centered around enslaved Africans before the American Civil War. The role of white women in the Antebellum South is expanded upon as well using personal testimonies of enslaved people, alongside other archival research. Jones-Rogers effectively shows how southern white women were active players in the harsh slave economy of the American South and fought fiercely to preserve their ways of life.

Jones-Rogers structures her book into eight chapters that describe the involvement of white women in the southern slave trade. She also explains their reliance on slavery to support their elite status in the society in the American South (xiii). Moreover, Jones-Rogers provides daily routines that slaves experienced during their workdays, both the cruelty and benevolence of women slaveholders, and how white women considered slaves as commodities that could be traded. Southern white women also held private auctions on their properties in which they purchased and sold slaves regularly. When the Union armies marched into the Confederate South, women slaveholders prevented their slaves from fleeing for freedom in attempts to hold onto their economic power (174-175).

In the epilogue, Jones-Rogers reflects on the consequences that the Union victory had on the power of southern white women and how they responded.

Southern white women were economically shattered once their ability to own slaves disappeared. In their efforts to keep slavery, southerners declared slavery to be a Christian value to civilize Africans. Southern white women thus considered slavery as "God's own plan" for helping these inferior people, and white women were following His divine instructions in furthering it" (201). The use of religion by white women exposed their true intentions with slavery with the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865. This amendment erased their elite status and rendered them insignificant in American society. White women in the South were forced back into peripherals of America as Reconstruction shaped the South to promote wage labor rather than slave labor.

Jones-Rogers demonstrates how women slaveholders in the American South were more actively involved and effective in the slave trade than previously assumed. In the most important chapter, "She Thought She Could Find a Better Market," Jones-Rogers shows how white women were integral components of the slave trade through their participation in private estate auctions instead of public town auctions (88). Southern women frequently posted in local newspapers of private estate auctions held on their property. White women were also efficient slave masters that could rival the effectiveness of male slave owners. Formerly enslaved people testified that their mistresses were just as cruel to their slaves as men, and women slaveholders even "seemed to take delight in torturing" (68). White women were also able to successfully represent themselves in the court systems when it came to debt collections, family wills, and domestic disputes that involved enslaved peoples.

The argument heavily relies on the usage of court documents, letters, and interviews conducted by the Works Progress Administration in the 1930s with formerly enslaved people. This book also includes graphic illustrations of slave bounties for runaway slaves who fled plantations that women slaveholders created to reclaim their assets. The incorporation of evidence directly from local southern newspaper outlets like *The Pensacola Gazette* provides precise descriptions to understand the cultural narrative that dominated the American South during the first half of the nineteenth century. Jones-Rogers provides an extensive amount of evidence that southern white women were heavily involved in trading and disciplining slaves.

Eric Ramirez Panzieri

Genealogical Fictions: Limpieza de Sangre, Religion, and Gender in Colonial Mexico. By María Elena Martínez. Stanford University Press, 2008. 1, 407 pp. Illustrations. Maps. Appendix. Glossary. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$35.00, cloth.

María Elena Martínez revises previous scholarship on the rigidity of the Spanish *casta* system. In *Genealogical Fictions*, Martínez focuses on the Spanish fixation with *limpieza de sangre* (purity of blood). Martínez traces the purity of blood to the *Reconquista* and how it reformed and adapted, traveling across the Atlantic to fit the needs of the Spanish colonial system in the New World. Martínez centers the narrative on the interaction between religious practices, law, and family lineage. Martínez argues that the hierarchy based on race and degrees of whiteness that currently exists in the Spanish-speaking world was constructed in the early Spanish empire through the church and legal system and was more flexible than previously understood.

Genealogical Fictions traces the development of the purity-of-blood doctrine from Iberia to the Spanish colonies. The first part explains the origins of the purity-of-blood system that emerged from the Spanish *Reconquista*. Martínez explains that the purity of blood reflected one's family's religious history. The context and history are important to understand how purity of blood is used differently, as the colonial world lacked the Jewish and Muslim population that the religious code sought to exclude and or marginalize. Martínez, in part two, showcases the shift in the purity-of-blood concept and its incorporation into Mexico. The lack of non-Christians and the fact that all the indigenous populations were considered new Christians meant race and the *casta* system would be the new foundation in which blood or skin color and genealogy would prove how pure or Spanish a person was. In the third part of the book, Martínez uses extensive legal documents and cases of individuals from different castes, maneuvering and negotiating the religious and political institutions of the Spanish empire.

Martínez's theoretical approach is grounded in discursive theory. Foucault is cited as essential to the work's genealogical methodology. The extraction of race and the development of how religious doctrine can construct race as a form of power is what Martínez adds to the scholarship. Martínez weaves gender into the overarching analysis and demonstrates how wom-

en were the deciding factor in determining whether male descendants' blood was pure or tainted. Martínez successfully integrates how the church controlled the purity of blood through the female body. Martínez shows how women were gatekeepers to elite status.

The sources Martínez uses demonstrate a depth of archival research. The vast number of ecclesiastical and university records shows how the church and the elite gatekept those of lower castes through entrance requirements tied to one's purity of blood. Martínez's use of Inquisition records highlights officials' judgments regarding family lineages. These records are crucial to understand those who petitioned the church for purity, as well as the Inquisition's investigations against individuals under the Spanish crown and church authority. Martínez includes records of *gracias al sacar* (by your leave), which granted low-status caste members higher positions. Martínez's integration of these sources strengthens her thesis and illuminates the legal conflicts between people and institutions.

Genealogical Fictions fills a much-needed gap in colonial history, as this book adds to the broader body of colonial scholarship. Martínez contributes to the history of Latin America by incorporating analyses of institutional racism and gender. This work shows that the Spanish Empire was instrumental in creating systemic racism by creating varying degrees of skin color that situated people's place in society and the positions they could aspire to. Martínez only falls short of diving deeper into the lowest classes within the caste system. The broader historiography has benefited from Martínez's work and the research that has brought to light how race is constructed.

Steven Ramos

Empire of Cotton: A Global History. By Sven Beckert. New York: Vintage Books, 2015, ix, 640pp. Acknowledgement. Notes. Index. \$14.69, Paperback.

Sven Beckert's *Empire of Cotton* is a monumental introduction into the history of the World. Through analyzing the commodity of cotton, Beckert's book establishes a concise evolution of the commodity from its place as a simple household item used for domestic purposes in the regions of Mexico, India, and Eastern Africa, to becoming an important commodity responsible for global movements of capitalist empires

to dominate the globe. Beckert also effectively documents notable occurrences of cotton's destructive capabilities, notably slavery and the experiences of working in an industrial era factory. Beckert's book develops in a chronological evolution, highlighting the most powerful historical moment of cotton, and its responsibility for kickstarting extensively global and interconnected events, and cotton's eventual dominance over the world. Beckert develops a list of well-known historical events that were directly related to cotton, putting into a new perspective those historical events and the global forces correlated to the commodity.

Beckert exemplifies the role cotton played in England's industrial revolution as it weaves the motivations of merchants, slavers, shippers, and government entities towards a common goal. In highlighting cotton's role in slavery, Beckert also beautifully demonstrates the connection between raw cotton, textiles, enslaved Africans, and global trade. Beckert demonstrates how cotton and its egregious labor process was a core factor in motivating to the purposes of slavery, and how this commodity would be enhanced and sold back into the system of trade that generated its beginning. The commodity of cotton, through Beckert's book, finds itself at the center of a developing world through its timing and significance in the industrial revolution.

Beckert offers new connections through his description of two key concepts early in the book, those being *war capitalism* and *industrial capitalism* and how these two concepts influenced the motivations of empires and nations. War Capitalism, as Beckert comes to define, was the action of locating, conquering, proscribing, and working the land, as well as summoning the capability to grow and cultivate that commodity as well as manipulate a growing demand for that commodity. Industrial Capitalism would be the second stage in elevating cotton's place as a global force that interacted with many global actors as well as causing or influencing global events. Beckert proceeds through the 20th century continuing to exemplify the purposes of cotton on the world and its continued effects on global trade. Through this demonstration Beckert deciphers a key characteristic of capitalism and the consequence that certain actions can have on the world system. In Beckert's focus on the commodity of cotton, he effectively demonstrates capitalism and its capability to affect world systems.

Sven Beckert is currently a Professor of History at Harvard University and teaches the history of the United States in the nineteenth century, as well as global history, concurrently. He is a Co-Director of the Program on the Study of Capitalism at Harvard University. He earned a Bancroft Prize and was a finalist for the 2015 Pulitzer Prize for History at Harvard, both for his book *Empire of Cotton*. Historians have noted that Beckert's book *Empire of Cotton* is a must-read book for any historian for its perspective on capitalism. He has also written *Capitalism: A Global History* and *The Monied Metropolis: New York City and the Consolidation of the American Bourgeoisie 1850-1896*.

Peter Tinoco

CLIO STAFF

CLIO STAFF

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Emily Anne Branecki is a senior undergraduate at California State University, Sacramento, pursuing her bachelor's degree in history with the goal of going into a teaching career in the future. Her academic interests include women's history, immigration history, art history, U.S. history, and 20th-century history. She is also a member of Phi Alpha Theta Rho Xi Honor Society and the Sac State History Club.

Ethan J. Chapman is a student at California State University, Sacramento. He graduated with his BA in History with a minor in philosophy in 2023 and is currently in his fourth semester of the MA history program. Ethan's areas of emphasis include nationalist movements in the modern Middle East, genocide studies, and collective memory theory. He is particularly interested in the use of violence as a tool of state-initiated homogenization projects.

Alyssa N. Crawford is a third semester history MA student at California State University, Sacramento. She is focusing her studies on modern world history, from 1000 AD to the present day, and 20th century American History from Reconstruction to the present day.

Amy Davey is a Master of Arts candidate in History at California State University, Sacramento, where her research centers on Native American history, federal Indian policy and the Progressive Era. She is Editor-in-Chief of *The Clio* and Social Media and Outreach Coordinator for the History Department. She serves as Research Assistant to the Shattuck Endowed Chair, supporting the scholarship of Dr. Antonio T. Bly in the Early American Republic. As Vice President of both the History Club and Phi Alpha Theta, she is an active presence in the department. Her archival research includes "The Gridiron at Carlisle," an examination of football as a site of assimilation policy, and "The Linnen Files," a study of surveillance and Indigenous resistance in the early twentieth century. She is currently completing her thesis under the tutelage of Dr. Khal Schneider on the Carlisle Indian School's legacy within the broader history of federal Indian policy.

James Dickmann is a graduate student in history at California State University Sacramento. His research focuses on nineteenth-century American history, with particular interests in industrialization and commerce. James earned a B.A. in History from California State University Chico in 2024 and is expected to complete an M.A. in History in Spring 2026. Following graduation, James will enter a credential program to obtain a single-subject teaching credential.

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Ciaran G. Henderson is a graduate student of History at California State University, Sacramento. He graduated with his BA in History in 2025 with honors. He is hoping to complete his graduate studies and pursue a professorship. His main research interests are related to East Asian History, LGBTQ History, Social History, and Twentieth Century History.

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Arthur Marquez Jr. is an undergraduate who transferred from Yuba Community College to Sacramento State University in the Fall of 2023. He is majoring in History with a focus on American immigration history and world history.

Atlas McDermott is an undergraduate student at Sacramento State who will be graduating this year. They have been accepted into the history master's program and will return in the fall, with the goal of teaching in college one day. They have a keen interest in the history of medicine and science and hope to focus their research within these fields.

Eric Ramirez Panzieri is a graduate student at California State University, Sacramento, who specializes in world history, from 1000 A.D. to the present, and modern American history, from 1863 to the present. These specialties guide his passion for conducting historical research, as well as reexamining the traditional understanding of modern American and European history. He is Editor-in-Chief for California State University, Sacramento's historical journal, *Clio*, and is a member of the Phi Alpha Theta Rho Xi Honors Society.

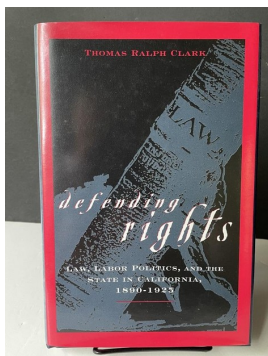
Steven Ramos is a graduate student at California State University, Sacramento, where he is completing a Master of Arts in History. He graduated *summa cum laude* with a Bachelor of Arts in History and has earned a Single Subject Teaching Credential from the same institution. He currently serves as a secondary history educator.

T. R. Selvaggio is an undergraduate studying history and political science at California State University, Sacramento. His focuses are on the late modern period and central European history, with a specialty in Austro-Italian politics. He will be completing his first degree this semester and plans to complete his second degree in the upcoming school year. His goal is to be a biographer of Austro-Hungarian and Italian notables of the First World War. He hopes to continue his education at the University of Vienna, in Austria.

Peter Tinoco is a graduate student at Sacramento State. He attained his B.A. in history in 2023 and his teaching credential in social studies in 2025, both attained at Sacramento State. He is currently preparing for his upcoming exams and interviewing for jobs to be a permanent social studies high school teacher.

ADVERTISEMENTS

F A C U L T Y P U B L I C A T I O N



Defending Rights

Law, Labor Politics, and the State in California, 1890-1925

AUTHOR(S) Thomas Ralph Clark

PUBLISHER Wayne State University Press, 2002

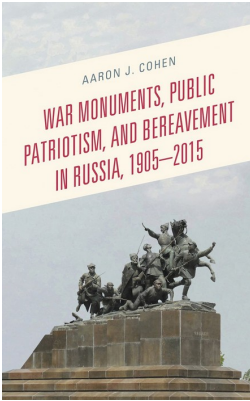
ISBN 978-0-8143-3043-2

DESCRIPTION

Challenging longstanding narratives about American labor's hostility toward the state, Clark uses California as a case study to show how legal repression drove workers into politics rather than away from it. By examining the contrasting worlds of closed-shop San Francisco and open-shop Los Angeles, the book reveals how labor's anti-injunction campaigns and coalitions with Progressive reformers laid the groundwork for the labor-liberal alliance that would define the New Deal era.

AVAILABLE AT <https://wsupress.wayne.edu>

F A C U L T Y P U B L I C A T I O N



War Monuments, Public Patriotism, and Bereavement in Russia, 1905-2015

AUTHOR(S) Aaron J. Cohen

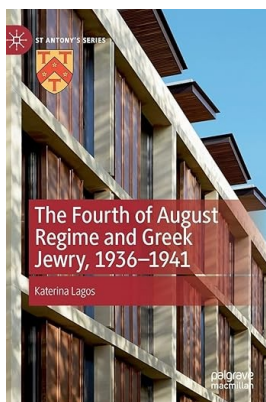
PUBLISHER Lexington Books, 2020

ISBN 978-1-4985-7749-6

DESCRIPTION

This study analyzes how public bereavement became cemented into the broad geography of Russian culture with the appearance of experiential and local memorials in the 1960s after a half century of instability, contestation, and absence. Cohen shows how monument builders responded to a need from the population to share an accessible war experience apart from the exclusive Bolshevik memorial culture, and argues that this development of war commemoration has amplified the role of war hero memorialization as an anchor of public stability and social solidarity in Putin's Russia, where there is little consensus about the past, present, or future.

AVAILABLE AT bloomsbury.com



The Fourth of August Regime and Greek Jewry, 1936-1941

AUTHOR(S) Katerina Lagos

PUBLISHER Palgrave Macmillan, 2023

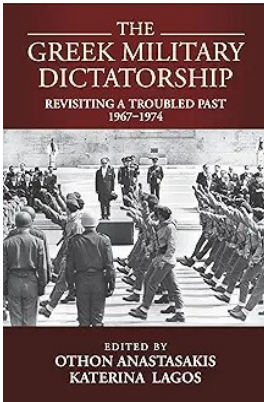
ISBN 978-3-031-20532-3

DESCRIPTION

Delving into a traditionally underexplored period, this book focuses on the treatment of Greek Jews under the dictatorship of Ioannis Metaxas in the years leading up to the Second World War. Almost 86% of Greek Jews died in the Holocaust, leading many to assume this was a consequence of Metaxas and his fascist ideology. Lagos reveals a far more complicated story. Drawing on unpublished archival sources and Holocaust survivor testimonies, the book traces how prejudice toward Jews in Greece developed differently from the rest of Western Europe, shaped by Ottoman legacies, the Greek Revolution, territorial expansion, and the demands of Hellenization. The first work to systematically examine the history of Greek Jews during the Metaxas dictatorship, it challenges assumptions about the origins of the catastrophe that followed.

AVAILABLE AT <https://link.springer.com>

F A C U L T Y P U B L I C A T I O N



The Greek Military Dictatorship

Revisiting a Troubled Past, 1967-1974

AUTHOR(S) Edited by Othon Anastasakis and Katerina Lagos

PUBLISHER Berghahn Books, 2021

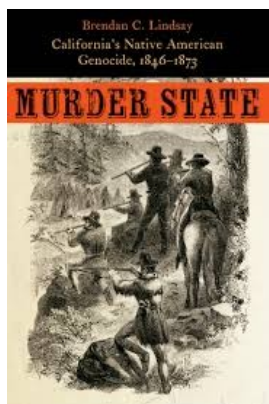
ISBN 978-1-80073-174-5

DESCRIPTION

From 1967 to 1974, the military junta ruling Greece attempted a dramatic reshaping of the nation, implementing ideas and policies that left a lasting mark on both domestic affairs and international relations. Bringing together leading scholars from a range of disciplines, this volume explores the junta's attempts to impose authoritarian rule upon a rapidly modernizing country while navigating a complex international landscape. Focusing on foreign relations as well as domestic matters such as economics, ideology, religion, culture, and education, the book offers a fresh and well-researched study of a key period in modern Greek history.

AVAILABLE AT <https://www.berghahnbooks.com>

F A C U L T Y P U B L I C A T I O N



Murder State

California's Native American Genocide, 1846-1873

AUTHOR(S) Brendan C. Lindsay

PUBLISHER University of Nebraska Press, 2012

ISBN 978-0-8032-6966-8

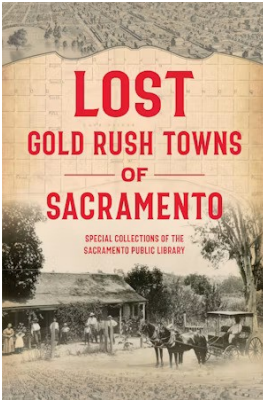
DESCRIPTION

Drawing on extensive primary sources and interdisciplinary genocide scholarship, Lindsay examines how Euro-American settlers in California used the mechanisms of democracy itself to carry out the systematic destruction of Native peoples. Through petitions, referenda, town hall meetings, and votes at every level of government, mass violence was organized and legitimized in the pursuit of land and resources. The book reveals how preconceptions shaped on the Overland Trail and amplified by the popular press fueled the elimination of Native communities, and how Native resistance was recast as justification for further atrocities.

AVAILABLE AT

<https://www.nebraskapress.unl.edu/nebraska/9780803224803>

S T U D E N T P U B L I C A T I O N



Lost Gold Rush Towns of Sacramento

AUTHOR(S) James C. Scott, Andrew McLeod, and Eric Webb

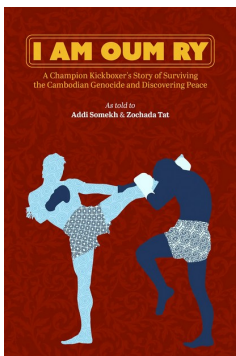
PUBLISHER ARCADIA Publishing, 2025

ISBN 978-1-4671-5113-9

DESCRIPTION

In the early days of the California Gold Rush, Sacramento City had several competing towns vying for the influx of newcomers. Many of its rivals boasted vibrant multicultural communities and superior geography for transportation and flood control. Drawing on the Sacramento Public Library's Special Collections, the authors recover the stories of once-thriving settlements like Mormon Island, Brighton, Hoboken, and Prairie City, exploring how rivalry, politics, and the railroad determined which towns survived and which were wiped off the map.

AVAILABLE AT [HTTPS://WWW.ARCADIAPUBLISHING.COM](https://www.arcadiapublishing.com)



I Am Oum Ry

A Champion Kickboxer's Story of Surviving the Cambodian Genocide and Discovering Peace

AUTHOR(S) As told to Zochada Tat and Addi Somekh

Afterword by Michael G. Vann, Ph.D.

PUBLISHER DoppelHouse Press, 2022

ISBN 978-1-954600-07-2

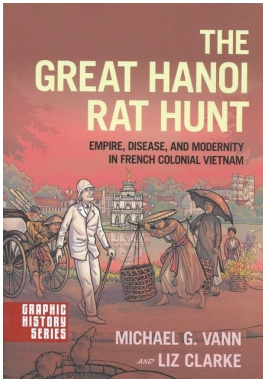
DESCRIPTION

Oum Ry came from a poor family who couldn't afford his food or schooling, so he lived with monks until seeking out masters of Cambodian kickboxing. He became the national champion at 23 years old; for 15 years he toured Southeast Asia, was never knocked out, and won more than 250 fights. After a young man's dream-life of stardom, parties, and girls, his new wife gave birth to a child in 1975, two months before the Khmer Rouge entered Phnom Penh and pushed the country into an abyss of mass executions, disease, and famine. Oum Ry survived the genocide, though much of his family perished. He was saved many times from death in Cambodia due to fame, talent, and his resilience, but suffered a life-threatening attack during Southern California's epic gang violence of the 1990s. This book is his oral history and includes a historical introduction, maps, and photos.

AVAILABLE AT DoppelHouse Press



FACULTY PUBLICATION



The Great Hanoi Rat Hunt

Empire, Disease, and Modernity in French Colonial Vietnam

AUTHOR(S) Michael G. Vann and Liz Clarke

PUBLISHER Oxford University Press, 2019

ISBN 978-0-19-060269-7

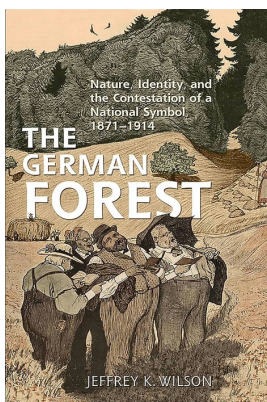
DESCRIPTION

The Great Hanoi Rat Hunt is a graphic history about the French colonial government's failed attempt to eradicate rats in Hanoi to stop the bubonic plague, revealing the contradictions of imperialism, racialized inequality, and Vietnamese resistance through a darkly humorous story of a bounty program. The book uses a unique format, framing the narrative as a lecture by the author, and includes primary sources and essays to explore themes of modernization, disease, and colonialism in French Indochina.

AVAILABLE AT Oxford University Press



F A C U L T Y P U B L I C A T I O N



The German Forest

Nature, Identity, and the Contestation of a National Symbol, 1871-1914

AUTHOR(S) Jeffrey K. Wilson

PUBLISHER University of Toronto Press, 2012

ISBN 978-1-4426-4099-3

DESCRIPTION

The German Forest is the first book-length history of the development and contestation of the “German forest” as a national symbol. Jeffrey K. Wilson challenges the dominant interpretation that German connections to nature were rooted in agrarian romanticism, showing instead how woodlands became a catalyst for modernization, capitalism, and conservation. Through case studies ranging from demands for public access to forestland, to state attempts to integrate ethnic Slavs through forestry, to radical nationalist visions of woodlands as a model for the German “race,” Wilson demonstrates that the forest could serve as both a unifying symbol and a vehicle for protest and strife.

AVAILABLE AT <https://utorontopress.com>

We debated how to do this. A proper tribute felt wrong for someone who would rather we just didn't. We considered a contest to see who could perform The Cohen Voice the best, which, for the record, is still on the table. Faculty input was floated. Someone suggested a haiku. In the end we settled on this, which he will hate, and we ask the reader to understand that making him slightly uncomfortable is itself an act of affection.

Dr. Cohen is stepping down as faculty advisor to The Clio this year.

Here is what we can tell you about him. He showed up. Not in the abstract, motivational-poster sense of the word, but literally. Every speakers' series, every meeting, and even mixers in the summertime when no one would have noticed if he stayed home. He has always had time for his students, even when we probably did not deserve it, and he has weathered years of our editorial meltdowns and chaos with a patience he would deny when asked.

If you have had the luck to take a course from Dr. Cohen, you have vied for his approval at some point, and you know exactly how good it feels when you get it. You also know that everyone, across every volume, has at some point wanted to buy this man a beer.

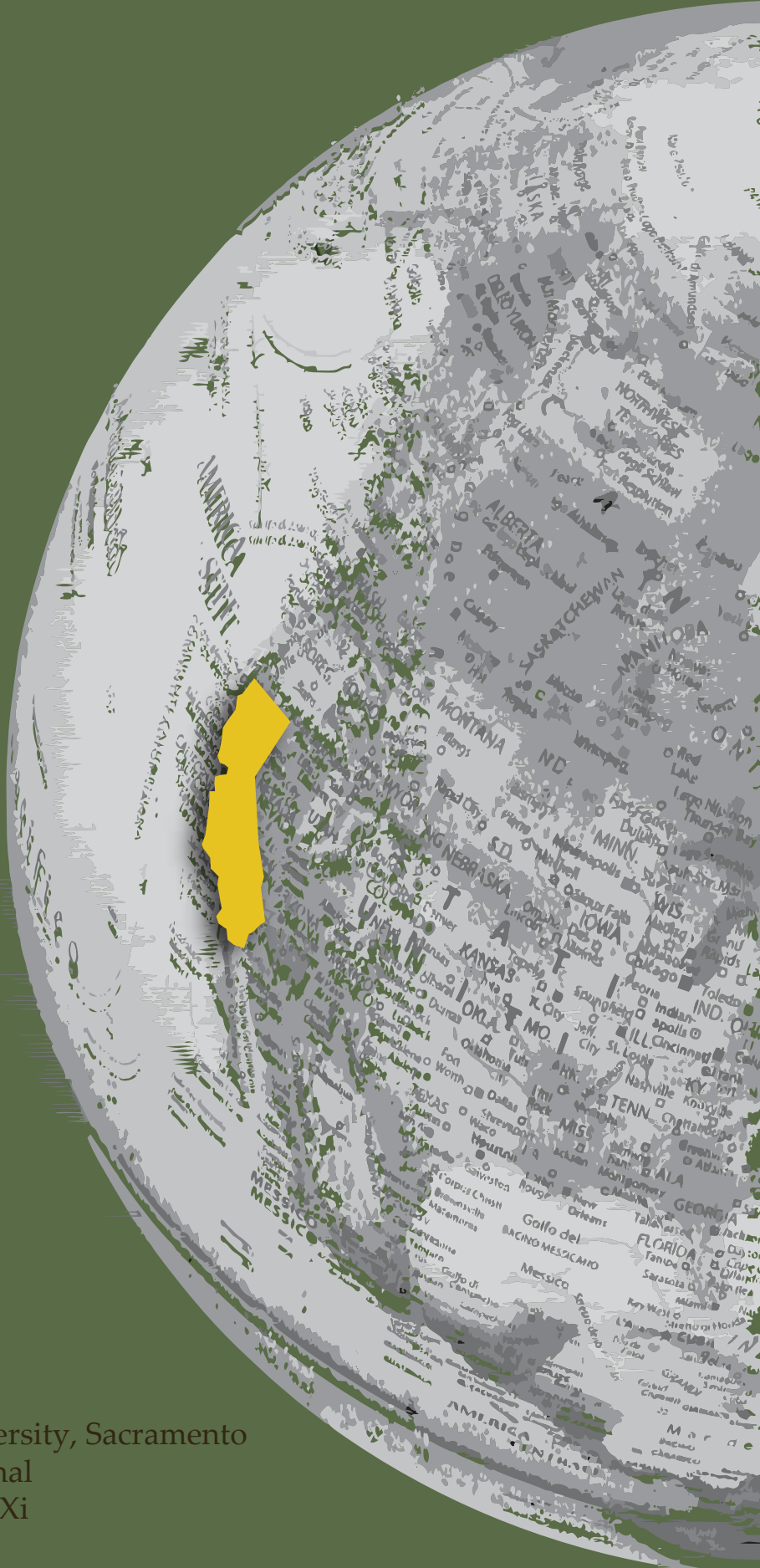
He is also the drummer for the Dead Hornets. We will leave that there.

You cannot go wrong listening to his advice. We never have.

Dr. Cohen, thank you for everything. The Clio will miss you.

Sincerely,

The Editorial Team



California State University, Sacramento
Student History Journal
Phi Alpha Theta Rho Xi