Recounting the Past

A Student Journal of Historical Studies

At Illinois State University

Number 24 • Spring 2023

Department of History

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Editors

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Acknowledgments:

Through its journal *Recounting the Past*, the History Department is honored to recognize the research excellence of its undergraduate and graduate students, and the dedicated mentorship of its faculty. Alongside these students and faculty, many thanks go out to individuals who invested their time and effort at various stages of the production process. These include the University Marketing and Communication team that guided the journal through the publication process, and Trish Gudeman, Administrative Aide in the History Department, who served as the liaison with Marketing and Communication and provided her organizational expertise to realize the project.

Cover Image

The photograph on the cover of this issue is of a Bristlecone Pine. This particular family of trees have been the longest-lived life forms on Earth. One of the oldest is 4,800 years old. These trees are incredibly resilient and noted for their ability to live in harsh weather, bad soil, and in arid climates. This tree resides in the Inyo National Forest in the White Mountains of Eastern California and can be seen growing out of a dolomite rock formation.

Source: Mark A. Wilson, Great Basin Bristlecone Pine—*Pinus longaeva* — on dolomite. Image. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bristlecone_CA.JPG. Public Domain.

Note from the Editor:

Selecting papers that feature the excellence of the students enrolled in ISU's history courses is no easy task for the editors or the professors that select them, but it is well worth the challenge. Working with each of the students featured here was an incredible experience. Not only do these papers exhibit excellent research, but they also weave together fascinating questions about how we conduct research and uncover historical narratives.

In "C.L.R. James in Harmony," Alex Silverman traces the life and works of Cyril Lionel Robert James. Silverman asks readers to consider what it means to be a professional historian and walks us through how James's career in journalism, fiction, and academic institutions challenges our assumptions. By following James's works, Silverman usefully shows how his work shaped or was ignored by critical theoretical shifts throughout the 20th century, which forces us to ask more profound questions about the works we include or leave out in our teaching and research.

Maritza Pitones, in "The Shifting Perspective on Nautch Girls in the 19th Century," deconstructs the British deployment of the term "nautch girls" to show how British imperial officials and citizens, especially men, in India manipulated complex Indian cultural categories. Through these acts of ignorance and violence, the British used this racist language to justify their imperial stance further, argue for their own cultural superiority, and embed deeply sexist language in British India by labeling these women as prostitutes.

In "Persistence and Pain: The Work of Reunification and the Gendered Implications of Freedom," Isabella Lethbridge pushes back against the complex Reconstruction historiography of the destruction of Black Americans' familial and communal relationships. Instead, she explores how the family unit survived by holding on to older and embracing new power structures that allowed freedpeople to navigate their upended world.

Using David Livingstone's life and those that wrote about it as a case study, Caleb Sauder explores how we wrestle with historical legacy in his paper, "The Myth of David Livingstone and the Protestant Church." Specifically, he argues that historians must be critical of the

"hagiographic" history of Livingstone and confront the fact that there existed both the idea of Livingstone and the real Livingstone. Sauder effectively shows how the church wrote and used the myth of Livingstone to advance their disparate agendas while also reminding readers that the myth is still being written.

In his paper, "The 'Jewish Question' in the Soviet Union and Representations of Israel from 1956-1964," Mark Anbinder explores "The Thaw" during which time Nikata Kruschchev sought to reform many Soviet policies and its reputation, including the crafting of a more inclusive and friendly state. Despite this rhetoric, the Soviet Union maintained overtly anti-Semetic policies, many of which had deep historical roots, and denied past mistreatment of their Jewish population. Anbinder uses this history to explain and better understand Soviet alliances with anti-Israeli countries throughout the late-20th century.

In "They Were the Messengers:" Lesbian Librarians in the LGTBQ Movement," Shannon Thommes investigates the lives and works of late-20th century lesbian librarians that sought to combat the stereotypes made against their community, advocate for LGTBQ rights, and create increasingly visible and accessible spaces in libraries. Thommes uses this story to supplement the growing literature on the LGTBQ Rights Movement by showing how these often-ignored figures wielded their institutional knowledge to redefine library spaces and create networks for others involved in the movement.

And lastly, in her paper, "Rohinghya Refugee Crisis: Double-Edged Consequences on Bangladesh and the Rohingya Community," Tahsina Nasir charts the layered history of the Rohingya Refugee Crisis in Bangladesh to show how the crisis, especially since 2017, has had dire consequences for the refugees as well as the host country. She effectively demonstrates how centuries-long sociocultural tensions alone do not explain this conflict or offer a solution.

Although these papers cover a variety of geographies, temporalities, and historiographies, they all center on one theme: Resilience. Therefore, I chose the Bristlecone Pine as the cover image for this year's journal. Some of these trees are among the longest-lived lifeforms on the planet. They survive, often when it does not make sense. Historians frequently encounter both admirable and insidious resiliencies in their scholarship, and we work to understand them, even

when, and perhaps especially when, they do not make sense. Each of these papers engages with a type of resilience– the resilience of institutional canon, colonial language, family structures, idealized historical figures, anti-Semitic practices, activists, and long-term crises and the people suffering through them. I am grateful for their work and all I learned in preparing this year's *Recounting the Past*.

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Historiographic Essay

C. L. R. James in Harmony

By Alex Silverman

Cyril Lionel Robert James is primarily remembered as a historian of the Haitian Revolution. He is remembered this way even though much of his life bucked traditional notions of what it means to be a professional historian. James was never affiliated with an academic institution, began his career writing fiction, and worked for years as a cricket correspondent with the *Manchester Guardian* before concentrating on Haiti. How should this evolution be interpreted? Was he a writer, *then* a journalist, *then* a historian, or some hazy combination of all three? Is nuance lost when the complexity of a life is quantified into an itemized list? Moreover, how should the work of such an unconventional intellectual be remembered and studied today?

It should be studied *in toto*. To enhance our understanding of James, it is essential to expand his corpus by including the plays and writings on cricket that rarely receive the acclaim that his work on the Haitian Revolution does. Inviting these literary pieces into the fray conveys a better reflection of his life and legacy while demonstrating the elegance of his poetic approach to history. Accordingly, this essay draws from a range of James's writings and biographical information from his life to represent the beauty and efficacy of his idiosyncratic voice.

James's story begins and ends in the West Indies. He was born in Trinidad, just off the coast of Venezuela, in 1901. He spent the first third of his life in Tunapuna, a town of roughly 3000 people, eight miles from the Port of Spain. While he would eventually crisscross the world, it is hard to overstate the significance of the time and place of his birth. As a boy, he watched cricket matches from his bedroom window, falling into a complicated love affair with a sport symbolizing his oppression and liberation. As a young man, James met Arthur Andrew Cipriani, a WWI veteran and staunch advocate for West Indian self-governance. As a history teacher at Queen's Royal College (a secondary school), James taught Eric Williams, the future first prime minister of Trinidad and Tobago, who would write *Capitalism*

and Slavery.[1] All of this is to say that the necessary conditions to cultivate a leading pillar of postcolonial and Marxist thought were aligned in Tunapuna in the early twentieth century. James, who "could not ignore the restlessness of the Trinidad people," was poised to take full advantage of the opportunity.[2]

Coming of age during the Trinidad Awakening, an interwar period ripe with anti-colonial intellectualism, proved instrumental in James's development. "[T]ired of hearing that the West Indians were oppressed, that [they] were black and miserable," James turned his emerging talent as a writer to the cause of Caribbean pride. He chronicled Captain Cipriani's life and began contributing anti-imperialist writings to homegrown literary journals. Eventually, this passion for writing took James overseas. When he accepted an invitation to travel to England and ghostwrite the memoirs of cricketer and activist Learie Constantine, he was effectively propelled into the next act of his life.[3]

After arriving in England in 1932, potent political winds immediately swept up James. "I arrived in England intending to make my way as a fiction writer, but the world went political, and I went with it," he later said.[4] In a textile town dubbed "Little Moscow," James was fatefully introduced to the writings of Karl Marx. A quick convert, he eagerly mapped Marxist theory overtop of his own lived experience of colonial life. As it would turn out, the two meshed together quite nicely. James also witnessed a city-wide labor strike at this time, no doubt a meaningful corollary to his recent Marxist indoctrination. By the outbreak of the Italo-Ethiopian Crisis in 1935 — which "turned James decisively towards Africa"— he had already honed the requisite framework to tackle his most ambitious project.[5]

Published in 1938, *The Black Jacobins* radically re-envisioned the Haitian Revolution. In it, James sought to overturn the canon by "wresting the story of Louverture, and of Haiti, away from those in Europe and North America who for too

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[1] Walker Mimms, "C. L. R. James, Eric Williams, and the End of Slavery in the Caribbean," *Jaconbin*, October 10, 2021, https://jacobin.com/2021/10/clr-james-eric-williams-end-of-slavery-abolition-caribbean-black-jacobins-end-of-slavery-british-economy-emancipation.

[2] Anna Grimshaw and Keith Hart, introduction to *American Civilization* by C. L. R. James (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1993), 5.

[3] Christian Høgsbjerg, introduction to *Toussaint Louverture: A Play in Three Acts* by C. L. R. James (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 6; Anna Grimshaw, "Notes on the Life and Work of C. L. R. James", in Paul Buhle (ed.), *C. L. R. James: His Life and Work* (London: Allison & Busby, 1986), 9–21.

[4] Grimshaw and Hart, intro to *American Civilization*, 5.

[5] Ibid, 5-7.

long had distorted it."[6] Wanting a proper testament to the only successful slave revolution in history, he resolved to write it himself. Each of these terms (successful, slave, revolution) is essential to James's argument. He insisted that yes, it was the slaves who made the revolution, not outsiders or — as Haitian historian Jean Fouchard argued — "the maroons" who were responsible for the slaves' success.[7] James counters Fouchard's contention by arguing that the factory production process served as the "mechanism" enabling the slaves to become "disciplined, united and organized."[8] In effect, James harnesses the rhetoric of class struggle to interpret the structures of slavery as an effect of capitalism rather than a precursor. By conceptualizing the plantation as a factory, James embraced the enslaved as members of the proletariat and recognized their agency while also situating the horrors of slavery within the Marxist understanding of capitalist exploitation.

James simultaneously countered disingenuous narratives that the revolution was permitted due to imperial indifference or benevolence. By emphasizing the value of San Domingo as "the greatest colony in the world, the pride of France, and the envy of every other imperialist nation," he rebuffed notions that the French would have been complacent about losing their territory.[9] Moreover, by situating the Haitian origin story as a truer realization of France's revolutionary ideals of *liberté*, *égalité,* and *fraternité*, James underscores the significance of the country for world history. For James, "[t]he achievements of the Haitian Revolution… were among the most remarkable and important in the history of mankind."[10] The principal architect of the revolution, Toussaint Louverture, who was enslaved until 45, was "one of the most remarkable men of a period rich in remarkable men," and second only to Napoleon.

The Black Jacobins upended more than a century of consensus, and it did so from within a framework designed to resist change. To reposition the Haitian Revolution, James was limited to "accounts — often hostile ones — written by white contemporaries and white historians." Thus, he had little choice but to cull " details from accounts with very different intentions and [turn] them to new ends."[11] Also of

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[6] Laurent Dubois, foreword to *Toussaint Louverture: A Play in Three Acts* by C. L. R. James (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), vii.
[7] Defined as "those who had run away and made a life for themselves in the mountains or forests," who then, Fouchard argues, returned to build "the foundation of the Haitian nation." (*The Black Jacobins*, vi.)
[8] C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins*, rev. ed. (London: Allison & Busby, 1980), vi.
[9] James, *Jacobins*, ix.
[10] Dubois, *Toussaint Louverture*, vii.
[11] C. L. R. James, *Toussaint Louverture: A Play in Three Acts* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), vii-viii.

paramount import were the memoirs of French General Pamphile de Lacroix, which James consulted extensively.[12]

James was uniquely predisposed to undertake this endeavor by his own account: "[M]y West Indian experiences and my study of Marxism had made me see what had eluded many previous writers, that it was the slaves who had made the revolution."[13] Growing up on a West Indian island "not, in fact, too unlike the territory of Haiti," enabled James to hear the silences that so many others had ignored.

Reclaiming the story of the Haitian Revolution was a career-defining mission for James, but it is difficult to gauge its disciplinary impact. "*The Black Jacobins* is one of the great works of the twentieth century and remains today the cornerstone of Haitian Revolutionary studies," Rachel Douglas writes in the introduction of *Making The Black Jacobins*.[14] Indeed, there is little doubt that James's work precipitated a tectonic shift in the canon of Haitian history, slavery studies, revolutionary theory, and even Marxist understandings of class struggle, but it nevertheless remained unread — and largely uncited — for decades. How does one reconcile these starkly conflicting accounts?

Michel-Rolph Trouillot offers an idea. The author of *Silencing the Past*, himself a Haitian scholar, credits James's work for initiating a discourse around the Haitian Revolution — with the caveat that few were listening. According to Trouillot, even the translation of *The Black Jacobins* into French failed to ignite French scholarship.[15] But Christopher Taylor, writing for the online journal *Age of Revolutions*, posits a different theory: "The academic silence that surrounded *The Black Jacobins* perhaps owes less to the politics of history writing and more to a pretty mundane fact: it is unclear how widely available the 1938 edition was."[16] Despite its limited circulation, Taylor credits James's enduring work for kickstarting conversations around racial capitalism; for repositioning enslaved peoples as members of the proletariat rather than as "pre-capitalist residue;" and for fostering an

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[12] Dubois, *Toussaint Louverture*, ix.
[13] James, *Jacobins*, vi.
[14] Rachel Douglas, *Making The Black Jacobins*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019), 2.
[15] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995) 102.
[16] Christopher Taylor, "The Black Jacobins: From Great Book to Classic?," Age of Revolutions. May 2, 2016. https://ageofrevolutions.com/2016/05/02/the-black-jacobins-from-great-book-to-classic/.

interest in history from below where Haitians are active agents in their destiny.[17] And yet for Taylor, despite all this historiographical significance, the legacy of *The Black Jacobins* is still imperiled.

Taylor laments the present status of *The Black Jacobins*, fearing that it has become "a text that one has read but does not read with, a book dropped into a citation dump or a lit review but never really recalled to be worked over."[18] For Taylor, *The Black Jacobins* has titanic implications for the canon, but just like the passenger liner, is now at risk of slowly sinking into oblivion.

Before moving on to James's later works, one final consideration of his Haitian project demands attention: his literary approach. Written at roughly the same time as *The Black Jacobins* was the play *Toussaint Louverture.* This theatrical work is somewhat tricky to contextualize. The biographer John L. Williams treats it effectively as the first draft of *The Black Jacobins*, claiming that the former was "rewritten" into the latter. Such a conclusion is initially perplexing — indeed almost laughable — but Rachel Douglas posits in *Making The Black Jacobins* that rewriting was "an important part of James's working methods." Rewriting as a "working method" hardly seems like a groundbreaking revelation. Still, Douglas cleverly demonstrates how *The Life of Captain Cipriani* was reworked into *The Case for West Indian Self-Government.* Moreover, James himself acknowledged that *Mariner, Renegades, and Castaways: The Story of Herman Melville and the World We Live In* was "merely a preparation for… [an eventual] study of American civilization."[19]

Still, there is indeed a kind of *je ne sais quoi* about the work that must not be ignored. Laurent DuBois felt strongly enough to pen an impassioned defense of the screenplay." [T]oo many readers of James… have seen his work of theatre as a kind of unsuccessful prequel to his legendary work of history," he bemoans in the foreword. DuBois sees merit in the art, for it empowered James to venture where the archives couldn't take him. As noted above, historical corroboration proved problematic for James, as with any history of an oppressed people, the sources were few and far between.

According to DuBois, a central theme of *The Black Jacobins* — establishing Haitian, African and enslaved peoples' agency — is "actually more foregrounded in the play… Perhaps simply because James found so little historical work through which to deepen this question." Thus, voices that were" lost to history… are

[17] Remnants of which can be seen in Eric Williams's *Capitalism and Slavery.*
[18] Ibid.
[19] C. L. R. James, *American Civilization* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1993), epigraph.

imagined into being" in James's work of fiction. With this in mind, the screenplay should be viewed as a separate but indispensable effort in James's mission to ensure "that the story of Haiti would be remembered and retold outside of the country, through the twentieth century, and into the twenty-first."[20]

As for James's later works, while they may not have radically reshaped the canon, they are nevertheless essential barometers of his intellectual development. *American Civilization*, his cultural and literary critique of 1950s American society, drew from his experiences living in the United States in the wake of the Second World War as well as his observations of racial division. The rising tide of American hegemony was a cause of concern for James, but he sensed an opportunity in the civil rights movement. "The more deeply he penetrated into the lives of America's blacks, both the industrial workers of the northern cities and the agriculture laborers in the south, the more certain James became of the key role they would play in America's future." With remarkable prescience, James called out the danger of an emerging capitalist world order: "He understood the modern era to be a moment in the history of humanity which would result either in the total reorganization of society by ordinary men and women (socialism) or the continuing degradation of civilization as manifested in the public violence of fascism, the Stalinist state and the threat of nuclear war (barbarism)."[21]

Interestingly, the work began as a Marxist reading of Melville's *Moby Dick*. For James, understanding the dangers posed by runaway capitalism was a theme explored in Melville's novel a century earlier. "James took the *Pequod* to be a microcosm of the newly emerging industrial society," and he viewed Captain Ahab as "the captain of industry… a man prepared to bring about the ruin of civilization in the pursuit of his own personal ambition." *Moby Dick* embodied James's Marxist view of history, that social change had to be ignited from the ground up, that "the fate of humanity lay in the hands of ordinary men and women, [and] that intellectuals would play no decisive role in the working out of society's future."[22]

Before James could finish his manuscript, he was deported, a casualty of the Second Red Scare. His deportation serves as an ironic and sobering illustration of his point: fascist groupthink came for James before he could even finish composing his warning. Consequently, *American Civilization* remains unfinished to this day, and it went unpublished for nearly fifty years. But while his work was intended as a cautionary tale, it also serves as a flashpoint in his oeuvre as an "indispensable link

[20] Dubois, *Toussaint Louverture*, ix-x.
[21] Grimshaw and Hart, intro to *American Civilization*, 2-11.
[22] Ibid, 16.

between his mature writings on politics and his semi-autobiographical masterpiece, *Beyond a Boundary*."[23]

It is fitting that a hard-to-define man wrote a difficult-to-describe memoir. Fortunately, James explains it beautifully:

> This book is neither cricket reminiscences nor autobiography. It poses the question *What do they know of cricket who only cricket know?* To answer involves ideas as well as facts. The autobiographical framework shows the ideas more or less in the sequence that they developed in relation to the events, the facts and the personalities which prompted them. If the ideas originated in the West Indies it was only in England and in English life and history that I was able to track them down and test them. To establish his own identity, Caliban, after three centuries, must himself pioneer into regions Caesar never knew.[24] (James, 1)

In *Beyond a Boundary*, James reflects upon the significance of cricket in his life, admitting that the sport "plunged [him] into politics long before [he] was aware of it."[25] Adapting the British pastime as a matrix, he explores themes of class struggle, oppression and identity — all within the boundary of sport. "For James, cricket was a metaphor for the world and at the core of its interpretation lay a method combining history with keen personal observation."[26]

In the book James argues — and is, in fact, credited with being one the first serious people to do so — that sport is a branch of the arts.[27] He insists that cricket is "not a bastard or a poor relation, but a full member of the [fine arts] community [which] belongs with the theatre, ballet, opera and the dance."[28] But the crux of this work is the intersection of oppression with cricket, and James's most quoted line, possibly of his entire corpus — *What do they know of cricket who only cricket know?* — can be read as a barb directed at his younger self. Before gaining the context provided by international perspective and Marxist theory, it is reasonable to conclude that a young James was mainly enamored with the physicality of the sport. But, after having "lived in England and the United States and [spending] many years both in

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[23] Ibid, 1.
[24] C. L. R. James, *Beyond a Boundary* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 1.
[25] Ibid., 71.
[26] Grimshaw and Hart, intro to *American Civilization*, 4.
[27] David Featherstone, Christopher Gair, Christian Høgsbjerg, and Andrew Smith, *Marxism, Colonialism, and Cricket: C. L. R. James's Beyond a Boundary* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018), 1.
[28] C. L. R. James, *Beyond a Boundary* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 196.

contemplation of cricketers… and [studying] political philosophy, American culture, and many other disciplines," James was equipped to untangle the relationship between his favorite sport and his advocacy for West Indian independence.[29] *Beyond a Boundary* is often cited as one of the greatest books about cricket of all time; it was also one of the last works written by James.

Death came for James in the summer of 1989. He had been living in London, revising his work "World Revolution 1917-1936," when he succumbed suddenly to a chest infection. His body was then returned to the Caribbean where he was given a state funeral at the National Stadium in Port of Spain. His tombstone, sculpted to look like an open book, displays a passage from *Beyond a Boundary*, reminding all those who read it that what matters most in life is "movement; not where you are or what you have, but where you have come from, where you are going, and the rate at which you are getting there."[30]

Figure 1: C.L.R. James Tombstone Permissions Granted by National Workers' Union Trinidad and Tobago 2021.

[29] Featherstone et al., *Marxism, Colonialism, and Cricket,* 5.
[30] Jackqueline Frost, "The Funeral of C.L.R. James," Versobooks.com (Verso, May 31, 2019), https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/4333-the-funeral-of-c-l-r-james.

Perhaps this is why James's work is so enduring. His writing, with its poetic brilliance and earnest humanity, is especially adept at moving us. But properly appreciating this voice requires that we consider it in all of its range. This means treating his literary endeavors as essential components of our canon and acknowledging that we, as historians, have much to learn from them. James's approach to writing, of cultivating a poetic voice in accordance with an historical one, is still undervalued in our discipline. But his work shows the potency of an artistically historic voice. After all, James's twin voices do a lot more than merely echo each other. They harmonize.

Papers

The Shifting British Perspective on Nautch Girls in the 19th Century: From Cultural Symbols to Prostitutes, Criminals, and Threats to the British Empire

By Maritza Pitones

Starting in the mid-18th century, the East piqued the interest of the West. A great example of this is the interaction between Britain and India. Britons considered India exotic, which is how most 19th-century Europeans viewed the Orient. In the 20th century, Edward Said coined Orientalism, "a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient."[1] It is an institution dealing "with it (Orient) by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, teaching it, settling it, ruling over it."[2] India's exoticism and unfamiliar practices both intrigued the British and confirmed their view of India as backward. As Britain colonized India, interactions between British men and Indian women grew common. In early interactions with nautch girls[3], Europeans saw nautch girls as primitive and perverse yet mesmerizing. The term nautch girl is problematic as it refers to various women in various occupations from India. Nautch is the anglicized form of the Hindi word *nāc,* meaning dancing, originating from the Sanskrit word *nṛtya.*[4] The addition of "girls" does not necessarily mean the dancers were young girls; the term was used for women of all ages. As Zara Barlas writes, "In essence, the term was a category that comprised a variety of Indian dancers, singers, musicians, prostitutes, and courtesans within a single expression, including everything from *devadasis* and *tawa'ifs* to *nautchwalis*, all of whom were very distinctive within their respective

[1] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, (New York: Vintage Books, 2003), 3.
[2] Said, *Orientalism*, 3.
[3] It should be noted that the term nautch girl is used in this paper in its contextualized form. The clustering of different performers comes from a lack of cultural understanding from the British occupants residing in India. I will use the term nautch girls as there is a minimal distinction made in primary sources. I will distinguish between the performers when possible.
[4] "Nautch." In *New Oxford American Dictionary*, edited by Stevenson, Angus, and Christine A. Lindberg, (Oxford University Press, 2010) https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195392883.001.0001/m_en_us1270666.

cultures, religious organizations and societies."[5] By grouping this wide range of dancers and entertainers under this term, then, Britons dismissed and disregarded the complexities of the various female performers and their religious and social strata associations, and erased their individuality, and diminished their power to exploit India and its people.

Before progressing, I will distinguish between two types of women categorized as nautch girls, the *devadasi,* and the *tawa'if*. The *devadasi* were women dedicated to Hindu temples, literally married to the gods beyond the reach of mortal marriage. As Philippa Levine writes, the *devadasi* was "Trained in arts such as dancing and poetry recitation, they also formed sexual alliances, often long-term, with high-born men, and it was the sexual element of their lives upon which colonial attention came to rest."[6] The *tawa'if*, the Urdu term for courtesans or prostitutes in Northern India, "were an elite class of performing community engaged in the production of dance, music, and poetry in the forms of cultural comments in pre-colonial Lucknow and other princely states."[7] They were the secular counterparts of the *devadasi*. *Tawa'if* entertained "only wealthy men and in pre-colonial India were often attached to the royal court. Carefully and lengthily trained in the performing arts."[8] There was no British equivalent to both groups of women. As such, British entities focused on the sexual aspect of their roles, disregarding their cultural importance, and ultimately classified them as prostitutes.

To understand the shifting British perspectives on nautch girls over the 19th century, the way British men in India related to Indian women needs to be examined. The European image of Indian women represented Europeans' understanding of the Orient; they embodied sexuality and highly erotic seductresses. The nautch girls were no different. In the late 18th and early 19th century, romantic relationships between British men and Indian women had grown quite common. Still, as the British government took a more hands-on rule after the Mutiny of 1857, relations between

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[5] Zara Barlas, *The Art of Imperial Entanglements: Nautch Girls on the British Canvas and Stage in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Heidelberg: The University of Heidelberg, 2018), 45.

[6] Philippa Levine, *Prostitution, Race and Politics: Policing Venereal Disease in the British Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 192. Read Frederique Apffel Marglin's *Wives of the God-King: The Rituals of the Devadasis of Puri* for more information on the devadasi.

[7] Sohani Chanda, Archana Patnaik, and Suhita Chopra Chatterjee, "The Courtesan Project and the Tawa'if s' Cultural Commons," *International Journal of the Commons* 15, no.1 (2021): 195, https://www.thecommonsjournal.org/article/10.5334/ijc.1073/#.

[8] Philippa Levine, *Prostitution, Race and Politics: Policing Venereal Disease in the British Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 192.

British men and Indian women were discouraged. With this came the changing image of Indian women as promiscuous and their association with disease. This shift in the image of Indian women changed the perception of nautch girls from critical cultural symbols and performers to simple prostitutes and as a threat to the British empire because nautch girls crossed British racial lines and challenged British racial superiority. The shifting perspectives on the nautch girls are observable in how early British and Indian interactions influenced British views on nautch girls in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. British values, entities, and legislature impacted the image of nautch girls as prostitutes, criminals, and immoral spreaders of disease. Nautch girls were viewed as a threat to British Victorian values, missionaries, and the Empire.

Historians focusing on 19th-century India argue that race played a significant role in Indian women's lives, especially concerning prostitution. David Gilmour argues in his book, *The British in India: A Social History of the Raj*, that the mixture of culture and people was a racial threat that could jeopardize British authority and the empire in India. Britain justified its empire in India to their "superior" culture and race compared to India's. The mixing of culture and people in India was a threat as it invalidated British superiority. There needed to be a racial divide, and the nautch girls were known to cross British racial lines, challenging their racial superiority.[9] Philippa Levine is another historian who works on this period, but she focuses more on prostitution and sex in the 19th century in the British Empire. She explores how Indian women became synonymous with disease due to ideas of racial superiority in the West over the Orient. In her book, *Prostitution, Race, and Politics: Policing Venereal Disease in the British Empire*, she analyzes how Orientalism and racism helped perpetuate disease and promiscuity to all Indian women. Orientalism played a prominent role in the association of disease and Indian women. The Orient was seen as a hot place and the "origin" of disease; as men began contracting venereal diseases, Indian women were blamed as it was only logical that women from a place where disease originates passed it onto British men. As such, Indian women became seen as naturally promiscuous carriers of disease. The idea that all 'native' women have the potential to be prostitutes came from the belief that "prostitution was the logical endpoint of uncontained desire."[10]

Another historian, Ratnabali Chatterjee, argues that the criminalization Indian prostitutes became possible due to the Contagious Disease Act of 1864. The

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[9] David Gilmour, *The British in India: A Social History of the Raj* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018), 409.
[10] Philippa Levine, *Prostitution, Race and Politics: Policing Venereal Disease in the British Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 182.

act was passed to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases within the British Army. In addition to the Contagious Disease Act, the Cantonment Act of 1864 helped organize prostitution through brothels integrated within British military barracks. Indian Women suspected of being prostitutes were subjected to invasive examinations described as "violent" and "brutal." The Contagious Disease Act allowed the forced isolation of Indian prostitutes and criminalization of those evading examination. The act also "ensured her position as a criminal in the perception of the state,"[11] symbolizing moral and political disorder. Chatterjee shows how nautch girls were believed to be unregistered prostitutes by Britons and, as such, were seen as criminals for defying the act. I will combine ideas from both groups of historians and argue that both race and legislation impacted Indian women and nautch girls.

The first interactions between Britons and Indians were very different from what they were at the end of the 19th century. The belief existed that the Orient was exotic and that Britons understood Indian culture better than Indians. This belief can be seen through the nabob. The nabob was British men in the 1780s, such as Horace Walpole, who "went to India with the intention of either making a fortune or retrieving one they had squandered or lost in some other way."[12] Initially, the nabob did not plan on staying in India; they wanted to make their fortune and leave. But this sentiment had changed by the 1830s. Traveling from Britain to India was too time-consuming; they would lose a year of their lives on a double voyage. As David Gilmour argues, "Men now tended to see India less as a short-term opportunity to make a fortune and more as the principal arena of their working lives, a place where they would have to stay to gain the promotions and pensions that would allow them to bring their families and retire in comfort."[13] British men preferred to stay in India after they made their fortunes as they did not have to waste a year of their lives traveling. They would enjoy a higher standard of living than they would back home. The nabob adopted aspects of Indian culture, but this did not always come from a place of genuine appreciation. Early British settlers validated their rule of the subcontinent by arguing that they were restoring India to its once-great past. They did this by being sympathetic to Indian religious traditions, learning Indian

[11] Ratnabali Chatterjee, The Queens' Daughters: Prostitution as an Outcast Group in Colonial India (Bergen: Chr. Michelson Institute, 1992), 10.
[12] David Gilmour, *The British in India: A Social History of the Raj* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018), 23.
[13] Gilmour, *The British in India*, 37.

languages, and smoking hookah.[14] The nabob also incorporated Indian culture into their lives by hosting nautch parties and performances. The nautch became a common form of entertainment and continued until the first half of the 19th century.[15] Nautches worked as a form of "cultural interaction between Indian elites and British East India Company officials."[16] The nautch girls were present at these parties as they served as essential entertainers. Nautch girls "enjoyed great esteem because of their learning and accomplishments – they were expected to be educated in sixty-four Kalas (arts and sciences) including dancing, singing, acting, gymnastics and above all, dexterity in lovemaking."[17] The beauty and appeal of the nautch girls enchanted the British. They represented the epitome of Eastern decadence, luxury, and sexual excess.[18]

The Nabobs were important cultural contacts; their lifestyle and experiences heavily influenced the British perception of nautch girls and Indian women. This can be seen through advertisements of nautches, correspondence, and, most significantly, paintings. When nabobs held nautch parties, they were usually announced in the local Indian newspapers and English papers. In July 1810, the *Caledonian Mercury* announced a nautch held by "His Highness the Nabob to the Governor-General."[19] The piece goes on to list who was present at the nautch. Nautches were exclusive events that elites would attend. Britons were fascinated by the nautches as they represented the British construction of 'Oriental' luxury and wealth. Focusing on nautch girls, they are described as "graceful creatures" dressed in gold and as flowing figures. Emma Roberts, a memsahib, a married upper-class woman, traveled to India from 1828 to 1832. She described nautch-girls as:

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[14] Grace Howard, "Courtesans in Colonial India: Representations of British Power Through Understandings of Nautch-Girls, Devadasis, Tawa'ifs, and Sex-Work, c. 1750-1883," (MA Thesis, The University of Guelph, 2019), 85.
[15] Pran Nevile, *Stories from the Raj: Sahibs, Memsahibs and Others* (New Delhi: Indialog Publications, 2004), 38.
[16] Grace Howard, "Courtesans in Colonial India: Representations of British Power Through Understandings of Nautch-Girls, Devadasis, Tawa'ifs, and Sex-Work, c. 1750-1883," (MA Thesis, The University of Guelph, 2019), 2.
[17] Pran Nevile, *Stories from the Raj: Sahibs, Memsahibs and Others* (New Delhi: Indialog Publications, 2004), 19.
[18] Grace Howard, "Courtesans in Colonial India: Representations of British Power Through Understandings of Nautch-Girls, Devadasis, Tawa'ifs, and Sex-Work, c. 1750-1883," (MA Thesis, The University of Guelph, 2019), 47.
[19] "East Indies", *Caledonia Mercury*, July 12, 1810, https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/BB3205356693/BNCN?u=ilstu_milner&sid=bookmark-BNCN&xid=7dc40ddd.

> Very picturesque figures, though somewhat encumbered by the voluminous folds of their drapery. Their attire consists of a pair of gray-coloured silk trowsers, edged and embroidered with silver, so long as only to afford occasional glimpses of the rich anclets…Over the trowsers a petticoat of some rich stuff appears…having broad silver or gold borders, finished with deep fringes of the same. The coortee, or vest, is of the usual dimensions, but it is almost hidden by an immense veil, which crosses the bosom several times.[20]

These aspects of nautch girls' performances illustrated the British constructions of 'Oriental' luxury, wealth, and sensuality. The depiction of nautch girls through paintings commissioned by Nabobs offered a glance into the luxury and sensuality of Indian women. Indian dancers and courtesans were seen as signifying Eastern debauchery and hedonism by Britain. The painting by British artist Tilly Kettle, the first prominent English portrait painter to operate in India, illustrates a dancing girl holding a hookah.[21] Taking a closer look, the nautch girl is embellished with gold jewelry from the top of her head to her ankles. Her abdomen is slightly visible, and a small glimpse of her ankles is visible. In her hand is a hookah: a symbol of power, leisure, and respectability.[22] Kettle, an English man, helped spread this image of the nautch and nautch girls as an excess of luxury and sensuality, the British narrative of the Orient. The cultural performance represented the epitome of the exotic and erotic East.

Early descriptions of nautch girls provide insight into how the British understood the nautch girls and the East. This is important because the way Indian women, in general, were seen was greatly influenced by this simplified image of nautch girls. This view of Indian women affected their early interactions with British men. In the early eighteenth century, most British men spent part of their careers living with at least one Indian or Eurasian woman. It was something that happened

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[20]Emma Roberts, " Scenes and Characteristics of Hindostan, pg. 189 in Grace Howard, "Courtesans in Colonial India: Representations of British Power Through Understandings of Nautch-Girls, Devadasis, Tawa'ifs, and Sex-Work, c. 1750-1883"(MA Thesis, The University of Guelph: The University of Guelph, 2019), 110.

[21] Tilly Kettle, "A Woman of the Court at Faizabad, India," painting. Yale Center for British Art, 1772, https://collections.britishart.yale.edu/catalog/tms:872. The painting's name has recently been changed from Dancing Girls to A woman of the Court at Faizabad, India, in 2021.

[22] Pran Nevile, *Stories from the Raj: Sahibs, Memsahibs and Others* (New Delhi: Indialog Publications, 2004), 160.

and was accepted, according to Gilmour.[23] At the end of the 18th century, "several marriages between senior Company officials and upper-class Indian women took place."[24]

With the 19th century approaching, two types of relationships between British men and Indian women became prominent. The first was the relationship between British men and Indian women, known as bibis. "A bibi was an Indian mistress, a common law wife, or a long-term consort of those Englishmen who could not afford to set up even a modest establishment in India."[25] Bibi relationships changed as British men no longer had to be wealthy since more single middle- and low-class men came to India as soldiers and officers. Likewise, Indian women did not have to come from elite families. By the 1800s, many officers had relationships with a Hindu woman or bibi. These relationships could be temporary under an informal agreement when the regiment left the station. Others followed the company for years and had children with their British partners. There was an appeal to enter relationships with bibis because of their perceived exoticism and seductiveness as "Oriental" women and because British women were not yet coming to India. The newspaper *Essex Standard*'s segment, "The Women of India," in 1836, depicts the appeal of Indian women. Indian women are described as being "delicately framed: their hands and feet are exquisite, and the latter, when not encumbered by ornaments, resemble those carved by the chisel of a Grecian sculptor."[26] The newspaper also goes into great detail describing their eyes. They are described as "splendid, dark, gazelle-like eyes, which form the characteristic mark of Orientals," and "having liquid, loving, melting eyes" that are "irresistible."[27] It was not only the "Oriental" eyes of Indian women that appealed to European men but also the color of their skin. Although Indians considered fairness a great advantage, it did not have the same attraction to European eyes. Fairer skin on Indian women was seen as "far less agreeable than the warm browns"[28] they had come to admire. European men came to associate these features as desirable and prominent characteristics of Oriental women. British men saw Indian women as different from their fair European women back home and instead admired the exoticness of Indian women. The appeal of

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[23] David Gilmour, *The British in India: A Social History of the Raj* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018), 283.
[24] Gilmour, *The British in India*, 284.
[25] Pran Nevile, *Stories from the Raj: Sahibs, Memsahibs and Others* (New Delhi: Indialog Publications, 2004), 11.
[26] "The Women of India", *Essex Standard*, January 15, 1836, https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/R3210141701/BNCN?u=ilstu_milner&sid=bookmark-BNCN&xid=07d57766.
[27] ibid.
[28] ibid.

Indian women to British men was an initial reason for entering into a relationship with a bibi.

Relationships between British men and bibis were primarily due to physical appeal that was made stronger by the British Orientalist view of Indian women, but there were also benefits to their relationships. Maintaining a bibi in India was significantly cheaper than supporting a white wife in Britain. Financially having a bibi was more affordable and, as stated before, could be a temporary affair or would end once the man returned to Britain. There was no legal messiness to deal with or divorce. A bibi would only require "a couple servants and an allowance for betel, clothes, and ornaments… and safer, of course, to have sex with than prostitutes."[29] Because of this, it was common for Englishmen to have a bibi or several when they were younger and in their middle age marry an Englishwomen. There was no color prejudice, and marriages with native women were common and even encouraged by the East Indian Company.[30] It is important to note that no shame was attached to these relationships; the bibi was highly respected in society. Officers might have initially entered a relationship with a bibi for their Oriental appeal and economic motives, but many found mutual affection. An example is Henry Littleton, a company official who had a bibi, a Brahmin woman called Raja, for many years until he died. He willed all his property and possessions to her. [31] There is concrete evidence that although bibis were not legitimate wives under the church, they received concrete proof of affection. Bibis would receive servants, allowances, and legacies for themselves and their children.[32] "If a man died unmarried, his bibi might receive the entire fortune, houses, animals, as well as money and jewels."[33] Although bibis were not considered legal wives, they enjoyed the benefits of one, such as an inheritance in a will and being taken care of, unlike women in similar roles in other places and colonies at the time.

It was also common for British men with bibis to care for their illegitimate children. Capitan James Nicholson and Major Charles Campbell are an example of this; they divided their estate and legacy equally among their children. Although they no longer maintained a bibi and later married white women, both men financially cared for all their children after their death, which was not common in other colonies,

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[29] David Gilmour, *The British in India: A Social History of the Raj* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018), 284.
[30] Pran Nevile, *Stories from the Raj: Sahibs, Memsahibs and Others* (New Delhi: Indialog Publications, 2004), 157.
[31] Nevile, *Stories from the Raj*, 15.
[32] David Gilmour*, The British in India: A Social History of the Raj* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018), 288.
[33] Gilmour, *The British in India*, 288.

especially for their illegitimate children. The formation of more affectionate relationships led to the Indianization of Englishmen, particularly those with bibis. Bibis helped Englishmen "learn about the lifestyle, customs, and manners besides the languages of India."[34] These early interactions between Britons and Indians were not frowned upon or seen as shameful. This was because bibis were loyal to their "keepers," as Captain Thomas Williamson describes them:

> [They] Have conducted themselves invariably in the most decorous manner and evinced the utmost fidelity, in every particular way, to their keepers; some have absolutely sacrificed property to no inconsiderable amount, and given up every pretension to caste; that is to admission among those of the same sect, or faith, braving the most bitter taunts, and the reproaches of their friends and relatives.[35]

These women earned the trust and affection of their partners as they sacrificed many things, even their relationships with family and friends, to be in a relationship with a sahib, an earlier-English man. Many of these relationships lasted twenty years or more without a scandal from the conduct of a bibi. Bibis offered companionship, and it often seemed they were married, regardless of their relationship's legal status. They would maintain the house, nurse their companion, and bear their children. In the 1830s, as more Britons moved to India, relationships with bibis began to disappear. In the late 18th and early 19th-century, relationships between Englishmen and bibis led to the formation of actual affection and the Indianization of Englishmen.

The other prominent relationship between British men and Indian women emerged around the 1830s as more Britons traveled to India. These relationships were more straightforward and tended to be between British soldiers and Indian mistresses or prostitutes. Young middle-class soldiers had decided that the gender imbalance with British women in India was too severe and competitions for them were too strong and pointless. As such, they settled on having relations with Indian women as they were more available. Additionally, as the popularity of bibis diminished due to calls for stopping racial mixing, maintaining a bibi was not an option for every British soldier arriving in India. This encouraged the expansion of prostitution. The army initially discouraged these relationships. Instead, they encouraged their soldiers to exercise. Captain Morris and other army officers urged

[34] Pran Nevile, *Stories from the Raj: Sahibs, Memsahibs and Others* (New Delhi: Indialog Publications, 2004), 14.
[35] Nevile, *Stories from the Raj*, 11.

soldiers to exercise to "sweat the sex out of you."[36] Here is one bard's perspective in a piece entitled "The Hunter's Song," depicting this sentiment:

> We value not false woman's kiss,
> We value not the miser's bliss…
> Let fools with women while away
> The precious hours of youthful day…
> A boar to us is comelier far
> Than Venus in her dove-drawn car…[37]

Songs and poems like this stated that it was better for men to go "pig-sticking" than be with colonial women. Most British men in India disagreed with this notion. Instead, most agreed that "a regular sex life was 'more necessary in a hot than a cold country."[38] The Orientalist view of British men helped perpetuate the idea that because of its hot climate, India was sexual and promiscuous – and so were its women. The widespread belief that hot climates "excited one sexually most terribly"[39] and increased relations between British soldiers and Indian women led military authorities to recognize their men's needs for sexual activity. They "thought they had no alternative but to permit prostitution and try to reduce the rate of venereal infection."[40] "Essentialized to the position of contracted prostitutes, *tawa'ifs* were seen as necessary entertainment to sate the libido of British soldiers."[41] Although it might not have been an explicit practice to keep British soldiers in the early 19th century from contracting venereal diseases, these relationships would, in theory, keep men safe and clean of venereal infection for when they returned to England for their future wives and children. Relationships in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century between British men and Indian women were influenced by the British Orientalist view and availability of Indian women. As a result, many Indian women, especially nautch girls, were sexualized and fetishized by British men. The early interactions with nautch girls, and Indian women, more generally, were initially portrayed as hyper-sexualized beings and represented as being available for British men's sexual consumption.

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[36] David Gilmour, *The British in India: A Social History of the Raj* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018), 326.
[37] Gilmour, *The British in India*, 327.
[38] Ibid., 328.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid., 332.
[41] Angma Dey Jhala, *Royal Patronage, Power and Aesthetics in Princely India* (London: Routledge, 2011), 110.

In the mid-19th century, there was an effort to change the image of nautch girls as immoral, such as the *devadasi* and *tawa'if*, which can be attributed to the threat they posed to British Victorian values, missionaries, and the British empire in India. Is it a coincidence that these three interest groups influenced the image of Indian women and nautch girls, from exotic women to prostitutes and criminals? The mobility of nautch girls through the British patriarchal society challenged a fixed legal and social order and was seen as a threat to their institutions. The portrayal of Indian women and nautch girls as hyper-sexualized beings by British men and media affected how they were viewed. This is important because their image and description of nautch girls shifted to a negative one in the mid-19th century. As previously stated, nautch girls' occupations varied, but they were generally seen as important cultural performers, dancers, and singers. Although the term generalized these women into a category, they held essential roles in pre-colonial India.[42] Even though the British did not necessarily understand the cultural importance of dancing girls, they viewed them as mesmerizing, with flowing dresses, fluid movements, and as sensual beings. The British perspective of nautch girls transitioned from seeing them as mesmerizing performers to seeing them as temptresses and prostitutes. To understand how this shift happened, examining how the influx of British travelers and soldiers affected the image of nautch girls is essential. The "shift in attitude towards the nautch girls is sometimes blamed on the influx of British soldiers of the East India Company, as they took the women as mistresses and gave them little in return."[43] With more and more British soldiers going to India, there was a higher demand for prostitutes. Once British nabobs and officials integrated into elite Indian social circles, they patronized nautch dancers and bibis. With the decline of bibis, prostitutes became popular. No longer were British men looking to support skilled and educated nautch girls, they wanted sex, and that was it.[44] Interestingly enough, Angma Jhala writes, "many of the Awadhi *tawa'if* who came into contact with British soldiers were disappointed by their lack of tameez (manners) and tehzeeb (culture), as their European clients neither understood nor were interest in cultivating their skills as poets, performers, and intellectuals."[45] As a result, many nautch girls

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[42] Grace Howard, "Courtesans in Colonial India: Representations of British Power Through Understandings of Nautch-Girls, Devadasis, Tawa'ifs, and Sex-Work, c. 1750-1883," (MA Thesis, The University of Guelph, 2019), 19-22. Reference pages 2-3 for the distinct roles of devadasi, tawa'if, and courtesans in pre-colonial India.

[43] Julie Peakman, *Licentious Worlds: Sex and Exploitation in Global Empires* (London: Reaktion Books, Limited, 2019), 168, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ilstu/reader.action?docID=5968184&ppg=150.

[44] Ratnabali Chatterjee, The *Queens' Daughters: Prostitution as an Outcast Group in Colonial India* (Bergen: Chr. Michelson Institute, 1992), 38.

[45] Angma Dey Jhala, *Royal Patronage, Power and Aesthetics in Princely Indian* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2011), 110.

were simplified to sex workers and as simple prostitutes, losing their cultural importance.

Although the increase of British soldiers in India is blamed for the shift in attitude towards nautch girls, the rise of Evangelical and liberal beliefs of British superiority also contributed to the change. This is because, "in essence, the eighteenth century was a period in which the British justified their rule through Orientalized images of India, which caused anxiety in the metropole. This was replaced with the imperial rule of India in a more firmly British manner by the early nineteenth century."[46] The firm imperial rule of India can be seen in various newspapers by describing nautch girls as prostitutes, tasteless, and a thing of the past. The 18th-century view of the Orient was no longer describing the nautch girls as exotic rather, they were judged by Western, more specifically British principal and morals. Newspapers began reflecting a more ethnocentric view when describing nautch girls. In 1784, the Hampshire Chronicle described nautch girls in this manner:

> "One particular class of women are allowed to be openly prostituted: these are famous dancing girls. Their attitudes and movements are very (illegible word) and not ungraceful. Their persons are delicately formed, gaudily decorated, and highly perfumed."[47]

As the Oriental view of India shifted towards a firmer imperial rule, the descriptions of nautch girls in newspapers did too. They were seen as prostitutes, tasteless, and extravagant to the point of being a nuisance due to how they dressed. By 1845, nautch girls were seen as a thing of the past, as described by the *Morning Post*. "But the days of nautches are gone; nobody now who possesses any claim to respectability (unless a chance stranger attracted by curiosity) thinks of joining the crowd of riff-raff which the native gentlemen of the old school collect in the houses on such occasions."[48]

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[46] Grace Howard, "Courtesans in Colonial India: Representations of British Power Through Understandings of Nautch-Girls, Devadasis, Tawa'ifs, and Sex-Work, c. 1750-1883," (MA Thesis, The University of Guelph, 2019), 163.

[47] "News", *Hampshire Chronicle*, December 6, 1784, https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/IS3241376815/BNCN?u=ilstu_milner&sid=bookmark-BNCN&xid=4a11514b.

[48] "Multiple News Items", *Morning Post*, November 22, 1845, https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/R3213519799/BNCN?u=ilstu_milner&sid=bookmark-BNCN&xid=d79dd239.

There was now an apparent demand for a distinction between races. After years of mixed and blended racial boundaries, there was a call to redefine the boundaries between the British and Indians. Finally, by 1886, nautch girls were described in the *Aberdeen Journal* as leading an "irregular course of life; respectable Hindoo women would not appear thus before the public" and "belonging to a particular caste, which is considered as similar to that of a snake charmer and juggler."[49] Nautch girls were still seen as exotic but no longer considered respectable figures. Now, they were seen as exotic entertainment for the commoners rather than for princes and the elite. This description also emphasizes Victorian values, as respectable women do not participate in the public sphere but rather in the private one. As more British men and women traveled to India, they brought their Victorian values.

Evangelical missionaries with Victorian values spearheaded the anti-nautch campaign in the late 1800s. The movement sought to dislodge the *devadasi*[50] from her social space and redefine her as a morally inferior and diseased fallen woman. The practice of the doctrine of separate spheres helped devalue nautch girls, *devadasi*, *tawa'ifs*, and courtesans. As Peakman argues, "During the British colonization of India, the nautch girls fell from their exalted position of esteemed artist to the role of common prostitute; their movements, previously appreciated as high culture, were now seen as merely sexually provocative."[51] Nautch girls, and more specifically *devadasi*, became the focus of colonial criticism because of their religious practices and "free" sexuality. The participation of the *devadasi* in the public sphere was frowned upon, as typically, a respectable woman only participated in the private sphere and was "free" of sexual desire. Some nautch girls participated in the public sphere as they would get paid for entertaining and, to some extent, participated in politics informally, which was considered a man's domain and role. The *Aberdeen Journal* described the financial freedom nautch girls had: "Dancing girls of repute used to be retained a month previous to the festival, at a fee varying from five hundred to a thousand rupees each for three nights. In modern times [1886] a girl has been known to refuse 10,000 rupees, or about (pounds) 1,000 sterling for

[49]"Nautch Girls", *Aberdeen Journal*, January 16, 1886, https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/BA3215453115/BNCN?u=ilstu_milner&sid=bookmark-BNCN&xid=96a195b4.

[50] The devadasi were a group of women placed under the category of nautch girl. Look at page 2 for further definitions.

[51] Julie Peakman, *Licentious Worlds: Sex and Exploitation in Global Empires* (London: Reaktion Books, Limited, 2019), 168, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ilstu/reader.action?docID=5968184&ppg=150.

performing three nights at the Court of the Nizam of Hyderabad."[52] A Victorian woman would ideally depend on her husband financially, unlike the nautch girls who made a living. Nautch girls and courtesans were able to "exercise power through cultural significance, courtly politics, and caste mobility. The most significant aspect of courtesans' agency was their cultural significance, for this informed all other aspects of their social, political, and economic power in the pre-colonial period."[53] Because of their cultural importance in India, nautch girls were able to exercise power in different aspects of life socially, politically, and economically that would not be appropriate for a respectable white woman.

The freedom and power nautch girls had to move within a patriarchal society due to their cultural importance threatened British Victorian values. Nautch girls, specifically the *tawa'if*, enjoyed quite a bit of economic and social mobility, threatening White British feminists. Jhala writes, "in the civic tax ledgers of 1858-77, Lucknow courtesans had among the highest individual incomes of any group during that period. They owned houses, property and manufacturing and retail establishments of food and luxury items."[54] While some nautch girls enjoyed financial freedom and could own businesses, White women did not have this same freedom. If Britain was of superior culture and race, how could it be possible that prostitutes (nautch girls) enjoyed more privileges than British women? This threatened Britain's Victorian values and Britain's racial superiority justification. Philippa Levine states, "sex was one of the most widely remarked upon mechanisms for measuring distance from civilization, and prostitution was always central in this calculus. Race inevitably influenced attitudes about sex, and vice versa. They were inseparable as categories of classification and assessment."[55] To overcome this threat, the British claimed that because Indian women had the "potential" to be prostitutes due to their uncontained desire, they were inferior to white women.

Additionally, the sexual roles of nautch girls automatically made them socially and morally inferior to white women in the eyes of the British. They helped shift British views of nautch girls as prostitutes. By classifying nautch girls as

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[52] "Nautch Girls", *Aberdeen Journal*, January 16, 1886, https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/BA3215453115/BNCN?u=ilstu_milner&sid=bookmark-BNCN&xid=96a195b4.
Grace Howard, "Courtesans in Colonial India: Representations of British Power Through Understandings of Nautch-Girls, Devadasis, Tawa'ifs, and Sex-Work, c. 1750-1883," (MA Thesis, The University of Guelph, 2019), 24.

[54] Angma Dey Jhala, *Royal Patronage, Power and Aesthetics in Princely Indian* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2011), 108.

[55] Philippa Levine, *Prostitution, Race and Politics: Policing Venereal Disease in the British Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 182.

prostitutes, there rose the need to make distinctions between White prostitutes and Indian prostitutes. While Indian prostitutes were seen as racially inferior and inherently immoral, White prostitutes were depicted quite differently when compared. Charles Trevelyan, the governor of Madras in 1859-1860 and finance minister in India (1862-65), described white prostitutes as "unhappy women who had lapsed from virtue, and (prostitution offered an) opportunity of 'shelter [from] which they might recover their place in society."[56] White prostitutes were prostitutes by "accident," while Indian prostitutes, therefore nautch girls, were "inheriting a long tradition." This distinction helped separate white women, even the lowest of standing, from colonial women and reaffirmed Britain's higher morality and racial superiority.

Evangelical missionaries believed Victorian women were naturally more religiously and morally finer than men, especially Indian women. Nautch girls, particularly *devadasi*, were seen as the lowest of women and as social evils by the missionaries. This was because "the *devadasi* was the most visible feminine embodiment of Hindu depravity, and her body provided the ground for ideological contests between old school colonial administrators."[57] John Shortt was an Anglo-Indian physician who served in the Madras presidency in Southern India. He wrote the "Bayadere: Dancing Girls of Southern India", which was published in the *Memoirs Anthropological Institution of London* in 1870. Nancy Paxton states that John Shortt, "factly identifies all *devadasi* as prostitutes" and "asserts that temple dancing is one of the 'worst institutions connected with Hinduism.'"[58] Many Evangelical missionaries and memsahib mirrored Shortt's sentiments on the narrative of Hinduism as depraved. Evangelical missionaries and memsahibs shifted the attitude towards nautch girls, more specifically devadasi, by spreading the narrative of Hinduism as depraved. In his 1870 essay, "Bayadere: Dancing Girls of Southern India," John Shortt highlighted the practice of kidnapping for prostitution and the intercourse between bachelor and married men with *devadasi*. He notes that "a married man is in no way ashamed of such lustful proceedings, but rather thinks it as an honorable act" and "this conduct is even approved by his wife and family."[59]

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[56] Ibid., 56.
[57] Nancy L Paxton, *Writing Under the Raj: Gender, Race, and Rape in the British Colonial Imagination, 1830-1947* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1999), 87.
[58] Paxton, *Writing Under the Raj*, 88.
[59] John Shortt, "Bayadere: Dancing Girls of Southern India", *Memoirs Anthropological Institution of London* 3, no.1 (1867-1869): 182-194, https://www.dropbox.com/s/llw1g4neuk37jld/AE-JohnShortt-Bayadere-or-Dancing-Girls-of-Southern-India-1870-0172.pdf?dl=0.

Shortt narrates Hinduism as an immoral and degraded religion and the *devadasi* for their connection to it.

Amy Wilson-Carmichael, an Evangelical missionary, volunteered at the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society and arrived in South India in 1895. Like Shortt, in her book *Lotus Buds*, Carmichael narrated Hinduism as a kidnapper of young children, forcing them into an oppressed life (and prostitution). In the first chapter, Carmichael uses lotus buds as symbols for the children of the temples of South India. She states that all lotus buds "belong to the Lord of all the Earth, the Creator, the Redeemer."[60] She is speaking of the Christian God, Jesus. He will now "claim" ownership of his possession. Carmichael intends to "help" Indian children from the possession of an alien power (Hinduism) who have "no right to them, and [the lotus buds are] crushed underfoot."[61] Carmichael narrated Hinduism as evil and taking innocent children from God and the true religion, Christianity. Carmichael's *Lotus Buds* represents the British belief that Christianity is superior to Hinduism. Missionaries, memsahibs, and others like Shortt used the "kidnapping" of children and the immorality of nautch girls as a driving point to discredit and demonize Hinduism and the *devadasi*, consequently nautch girls.

The Nautch girls' economic and social mobility threatened Victorian values but also the missionaries. They wanted to "restore prostitutes to their pre-fallen state of virtuous morality and asexual purity."[62] To do this, missionaries set out to educate Indian women, specifically young Indian girls. "This form of education was predominantly focused on the imposition of Victorian gender ideals and the model of companionate marriage onto Indian society."[63] By educating Indian women on Victorian gender ideals, missionaries were "uplifting" and "civilizing" them. The nautch girls were a significant obstacle to their goal, as the British believed many Indians connoted education with courtesans.[64] This is because missionaries like Marcus B. Fuller argued:

> For centuries dancing-girls had the monopoly of all the education among women. They were the only women that were taught to read and sing in public in the country; and hence these two accomplishments were so

[60] Amy Wilson Carmichael, *Lotus Bud* (London: Morgan and Scott, 1912), 4.
[61] Carmichael, *Lotus Buds*, 4.
[62] Ratnabali Chatterjee, *The Queens' Daughters: Prostitutes as an Outcast Group in Colonial India* (Bergen: Chr. Michelson Institute, 1992), 18.
[63] Grace Howard, "Courtesans in Colonial India: Representations of British Power Through Understandings of Nautch-Girls, Devadasis, Tawa'ifs, and Sex-Work, c. 1750-1883," (MA Thesis, The University of Guelph, 2019), 154.
[64] Ibid., 155.

> associated with the nautch-girl as to be considered disreputable for respectable women.[65]

Because nautch girls were some of the few women educated pre-colonization, learning became associated with them. In addition, with their shifting image as prostitutes, no one wanted to be associated with them.

Missionaries also claimed that Indian girls were being deprived of an education and would be tarnished by the *devadasi* system, the girls' dedication to the gods. In her book *Lotus Bud*, Carmichael describes one of many experiences she had with a young girl dedicated to the Hindu gods:

> She was small and very sweet, and she slid onto my knee and whispered her lessons in my ear in the softest of little voices. She had gone to school for nearly a year, and liked to tell me all she knew. 'Do you go to school now?' I asked her. She hung her head and did not answer. 'Don't you go?' I repeated. She just breathed 'No', and the little head dropped lower. 'Why not?' I whispered as softly. The child hesitated. Some dim apprehension that the reason would not seem good to me troubled her, perhaps, for she would not answer. 'Tell the Ammal, silly child!' said her foster-mother, who was standing near. 'Tell her you are learning to dance and sing and get ready for the gods!' 'I am learning to dance and sing and get ready for the gods,' repeated the child obediently, lifting large, clear eyes to my face for a moment, as if to read what was written there. [66]

Missionaries argued that the dedication of young, innocent Indian girls was forced upon them by Hinduism, their culture, ending their education and becoming servants to the gods. The *devadasi* system threatened the missionaries' goals to educate Indian girls and from helping innocent children from the "wickedness" of Hinduism. Carmichael writes that the only way to stop the dedication of Indian girls to the gods was by the government.[67] With the help of legislation, this tradition was criminalized under the 1860 Indian penal code sections 372 and 373. [68] The idea that Indian girls were forced to serve the gods and, as a result, became corrupt helped form the British perspective of the *devadasi* not as the "servant and wife of the gods, but a slave to unharnessed human desire.[69] Permanently, the image of the *devadasi* changed to one

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[65] Ibid., 155.
[66] Amy Wilson Carmichael, *Lotus Bud* (London: Morgan and Scott, 1912), 285-286.
[67] Carmichael, *Lotus Bud*, 272.
[68] Philippa Levine, *Prostitution, Race and Politics: Policing Venereal Disease in the British Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 192.
[69] Levine, *Prostitution, Race, and Politics*, 192.

of sexual exploitation and social evil. No longer were they held in high regard, even to this day.

Nautch girls also did not fit into British ideas of Victorian class rigidity and ethnic separation. "Subsequently, the British attempted to police courtesans' bodies, sensuality, and behavior to maintain their social norms and colonial power in the subcontinent."[70] This shift in controlling the bodies of Indian women and nautch girls occurred after the Indian Mutiny in 1857, also known as the Sepoy Rebellion. Indian soldiers initially started the rebellion in the EIC and became widespread, involving different people of the Indian population in certain regions. Although the rebellion was widespread, it was unsuccessful and ended in 1859.[71] The main causes of the Sepoy Mutiny included unequal pay compared to British soldiers, Sepoys' suspicion that rifle cartridges used animal fats they could not touch as part of their religious beliefs, and Indian princes had lost their states or had to pay high protection fees to the EIC among others.[72] The Sepoy Rebellion served as justification for the British government's more direct rule of India. As a result, the end of the rebellion marked the end of the EIC and India became a proper British colony with Queen Victoria as the Empress of India. This shift in rule fast-tracked the anti-nautch campaign using the legislature.

One of the first examples of direct colonial rule after the Sepoy Rebellion was the Contagious Disease Act of 1864. It reflected the sexual double standard that occurred from the central organizing principles of Victorian society: gender and class. The Contagious Disease Acts categorized nautch girls as criminals and helped solidify the notion of nautch girls as diseases and spreaders of venereal diseases. This was first done by changing the image of "native women" as morally dubious, unhygienic, and carriers of Venereal diseases."[73] The 18th-century exotic and sensual image of Oriental women was overshadowed by the image of "diseased creature(s) whose major harmful potential lay in her powers of flight and ability to evade the British law."[74] This change to seeing Indian women as spreaders of disease extended

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[70]Grace Howard, "Courtesans in Colonial India: Representations of British Power Through Understandings of Nautch-Girls, Devadasis, Tawa'ifs, and Sex-Work, c. 1750-1883," (MA Thesis, The University of Guelph, 2019), 166.
[71]"Sepoy Mutiny," *World History Encyclopedia*, last modified October 18, 2022, https://www.worldhistory.org/Sepoy_Mutiny/.
[72] Cartwright, "Sepoy Mutiny".
[73] Rukhsana Iftikhar, "Colonial Desire, Orient Beauty: Army and Prostitution in British India," *The Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan*, Volume No. 55, Issue No. 1 (January - June, 2018): 274.
[74] Ratnabali Chatterjee, *The Queens' Daughters: Prostitution as an Outcast Group in Colonial India* (Bergen: Chr. Michelson Institute, 1992), 11.

to nautch girls, but in a slightly different way. Because the term nautch girls encompassed a variety of women with a variety of roles, the lack of distinction is what ultimately helped solidify their identity as prostitutes.

For example, the inclusion of thakahi and randi as nautch girls was harmful as it categorized women with various occupations and different social standings. Thakahi and randi "lived in the market area and catered for lower class clients including the laborers,"[75] unlike the *devadasi* and *tawa'if* who served the elite and aristocracy and had one or few patrons. Because they performed sexual tasks, the British refused to recognize the hierarchical differences among "prostitutes" and "looked upon the dancing girls as products of the 'native society' to be left alone."[76] Because they were categorized as prostitutes, they had to adhere to the Contagious Disease Acts, which "were used to regulate the activities of *tawa'if* by forcing them to undergo often humiliating physical examinations. Increasingly, the *tawa'if* was categorized in criminal terms due to the discourse raging around the act."[77] If Indian women, including nautch girls, who were perceived to be prostitutes did not give notification of a change of address or failed to provide evidence of their registration to an officer would be "punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to 14 days, or with fine not exceeding 50 rupees, or with both."[78] Additionally, registered women disobeying any rules under the examination of prostitutes would be "punished with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to one month, or with fine not exceeding 100 rupees, or with both."[79] The changing image of Indian women as unhygienic and spreaders of disease, along with the generalization of nautch girls, ultimately changed the portrayal of women under the term nautch girls as spreaders of disease, prostitutes, and criminals.

Nautch girls were perceived by the British as a political threat to the British Empire in India as they "risked" British soldiers to venereal diseases and because of the political power they wielded. Nautch girls were considered a sexual threat to all British men. In the words of Mary Martha Sherwood:

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[75] Chatterjee. *The Queen's Daughters*, 21.
[76] Ibid., 21.
[77] Angma Dey Jhala*, Royal Patronage, Power and Aesthetics in Princely Indian* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2011), 110.
[78] Governor General of India, "East India Contagious Disease Acts (1868) ACT No. 14 of 1868," *in Politics and Empire in Victorian Britain: A Reader*, ed. Antoinette Burton, (New York: Palgrave, 2001) 127-128.
[79] Governor General of India, "East India Contagious Disease Acts," *in Politics and Empire in Victorian Britain*, ed. Burton, 127-128. The guidelines under the examination of prostitutes section explains the required regular examinations of Indian prostitutes.

> The women (nautch girls) had a way with music which drew the enchanted lovers to their lair.' Their singing had a mesmeric effect on the men as they sang night after night, 'the song of the unhappy dancing-girls, accompanied by the sweet yet melancholy music of the cithera . . . All these Englishmen who were beguiled by this sweet music . . . slowly sacrificing themselves to drinking, smoking, want of rest, and the witcheries of the unhappy daughters of heathens and infidels.[80]

For Sherwood, the nautch girls were temptresses who used witchcraft to entice good Englishmen who found it impossible to deny them, making them a sexual threat. As Indian women and nautch girls became prostitutes in the British perspective, they became a threat to the empire as the British believed there was a "link between the deterioration of nation character and consequent weakness decline and fall of nations."[81] Prostitution was not only immoral but British soldiers were being infected by venereal disease. Initial efforts to control the rampant spread of venereal diseases were seen as unsuccessful. By 1859, "infection rates for British troops in India rose to a staggering 359 per 1,000 of hospital admissions."[82] This was a significant military problem as venereal diseases could incapacitate an entire army, risking the empire's safety. Erica Wald writes, "While it was unlikely that such women (courtesans) would associate themselves with European soldiery, military and medical administrators were quick to target and ascribe the blame for venereal disease on the courtesans, who, in most areas, lay outside the boundaries of the early venereal regulations."[83] Initially, courtesans and nautch girls were not required to register and have examinations. However, this changed as the number of Indian women registering did not increase, but venereal cases were climbing. In 1821, "Mr. Dickson, the Superintending Surgeon of the Saugor Field Force, angrily noted his belief that the courtesans were a 'nest' of venereal infection."[84] And in 1878, "the

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[80] Mary Martha Sherwood, *The Life of Mrs. Sherwood*, ed. Sophia Kelly (London: 1857), pp. 448–59. In Julie Peakman, *Licentious Worlds: Sex and Exploitation in Global Empires* (London: Reaktion Books, Limited, 2019), 166, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ilstu/reader.action?docID=5968184&ppg=150.

[81] Ratnabali Chatterjee, *The Queens' Daughters: Prostitutes as an Outcast Group in Colonial India* (Bergen: Chr. Michelson Institute, 1992), 10.

[82] Philippa Levine, *Prostitution, Race and Politics: Policing Venereal Disease in the British Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 44.

[83] Erica Wald, "From Begums to Bibis to Abandoned Females and Idle Women: sexual relationships, venereal disease and the redefinition of prostitution in early nineteenth-century India" *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 46, no. 1 (May 2009): 14.

[84] Mr. Dickson, "Letter to James Jameson," in Erica Wald, "From Begums to Bibis to Abandoned Females and Idle Women: sexual relationships, venereal disease and the

Surgeon General of the Indian Medical Department dubbed *devadasi* a somewhat dangerous class of prostitute riddled with disease."[85] The courtesans, *devadasi*, and nautch girls were all seen as the cause of failure to reduce the levels of venereal disease among the British troops. They threatened their troops' health and ability to protect the empire.

Finally, nautch girls were a threat to British troops and a political threat to the Empire. As previously mentioned, most nautch girls were trained in dancing and singing, but the *tawa'if* (also known as courtesans) were particularly well educated. Additionally, Jhala writes:

> Royal and aristocratic courtesans not only have substantial personal wealth, but they also wielded political clout, manipulating the ruler and their noblemen towards their own ends. In certain cases they influenced the dynastic succession, indirectly governed when the ruler was incapacitated or was a minor, and compelled rulers to abdicate.[86]

Although *tawa'if* did not wield direct political power, their connections and association with the elite made them dangerous to the British Empire in India. Jhala also stated that "according to Veena Oldenburg in Awadhi Lucknow, princely courtesans played a significant role in court politics during the mutiny of 1857 and received the patronage not only of the monarchy but of chief noblemen and merchants."[87] The British saw the *tawa'if* as dangerous because of their connections and ability to influence Indian elites and aristocrats. But after the Mutiny of 1857, it became clear they were dangerous and a threat to British rule. In Lata Singh's article, Visibilising the 'Other' in History: Courtesans and the Revolt, she explains the covert involvement of the *tawa'if*. They contributed to the Mutiny by offering their homes as meeting points, or "dens of political conspiracy," as the British called them.[88] After the Mutiny, "courtesans' names were on the lists of property confiscated by British officials for proven involvement in the siege and rebellion against colonial rule in 1857."[89] Confiscating the *tawa'ifs*' property prevented them from being economically independent in the new Raj. Interestingly enough, after the Mutiny, we

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redefinition of prostitution in early nineteenth-century India" *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 46, no. 1 (May 2009): 14.

[85] Philippa Levine, *Prostitution, Race and Politics: Policing Venereal Disease in the British Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 192.

[86] Angma Dey Jhala, *Royal Patronage, Power and Aesthetics in Princely India* (London: Routledge, 2011), 108.

[87] Jhala, *Royal Patronage, Power and Aesthetics in Princely India,* 108.

[88] Lata Singh, "Visibilising the 'Other' in History: Courtesans and the Revolt," *Economic and Political Weekly* 42, no. 19 (2007): 1678.

[89] Singh, "Visiblising the 'Other' in History, 1678.

see a more significant change in the British perspective of nautch girls. By the 1860s, nautch girls were categorized as prostitutes by the Contagious Disease Act of 1864, criminals by the penal code of India with the outlawing of the *devadasi* system, and disempowered by Victorian morals, missionaries, and legislature.

The British view of nautch girls had always been connected with that of Indian women more generally. The portrayal of these women changed throughout the 19th century as British interest groups fought to keep clear racial distinctions and the empire's safety. Orientalism helped create the initial British view of Indian women as exotic beings in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Early portrayals of both nautch girls and Indian women affected early romantic and sexual relationships between British men and Indian women. Initially, bibis appealed to British men because of early portrayals of Indian women by nabobs and artists such as Tilly Kettle. As romantic relationships between British men and bibis became common, they were seen as threats because Britons were mixing with an inferior race and adopting parts of the "low" culture. The influx of British soldiers in India and the discouragement of the British East Indian Company of bibi relationships shifted the roles and image of nautch girls and Indian women to hypersexualized beings.

Orientalism helped perpetuate the idea that because of its hot climate, India was promiscuous and the origin of disease. The image of nautch girls as prostitutes was perpetuated as their cultural roles were no longer desired. Because of their new image as prostitutes, they were described as things of the past and disreputable. With their Victorian values, Evangelical missionaries helped change the image of nautch girls as morally inferior and depraved because of their ability to move through the patriarchal society and the "kidnapping" of children. After the Mutiny of 1857, the image of nautch girls as prostitutes, criminals, and spreaders of venereal disease was solidified with the Contagious Disease Act of 1864. The categorization of various women with various occupations ultimately helped solidify their identity as prostitutes. British Victorian values, Missionaries, and the British government were responsible for the shifting British image of nautch girls. This is because nautch girls' social and economic freedom did not apply to white women. And as such, it raised questions about British racial superiority. The missionaries shifted the British image of nautch girls because they threatened their goal of educating Indian women by describing them as forcing Indian girls into prostitution and ending their education to become "civilized." Finally, the British government viewed nautch girls as a threat to their rule of India. They threatened the health of their troops which put the safety of the empire at risk. Nautch girls also threatened the British Empire due to their political power, especially after the Mutiny of 1857. British perspectives and representations of nautch girls shifted from seeing them as erotic creatures to portraying them as prostitutes, criminals, and immoral spreaders of disease as they posed increasing threats to British Victorian values, missionaries, and the Empire.

Those who are in power, in this case, 19th century Britain, diminished the power of critical cultural symbols by oversimplifying their roles and depicting them as inferior to justify their "superiority" and colonization. The oppression of the colonized is not something new, but the way historians, authors, and educators choose to present historical events is vital to whom we give that power. Traditionally, those in power have written literature and used it to oppress people of color and the colonized. The depiction of nautch girls in English newspapers is an example of how representations can celebrate or destroy the image of traditionally oppressed people. As historians, we have a duty to use the primary sources available to help us better understand the past and give power back to the oppressed. Analyzing historical events in different perspectives is vital to help empower the oppressed and not victimize them. The use of unconventional sources, such as oral histories and those written by the oppressed, is key. This may be difficult as many primary sources from the oppressed have been destroyed or lost. This does not mean that their stories are not to be told, but rather, historians must analyze traditional primary sources from different perspectives and acknowledge their faults. I attempted to do this in my own work by explaining the complexity of nautch girls and the power they held in the British empire. When possible, I made sure to provide distinction and not generalize the *devadasi* and *tawa'if* it is important to recognize their differences and their identities. Additionally, I used traditional sources that depicted nautch girls as social evils to empower them by showing that they held power in the British Empire; they were not inferior and, therefore, seen as a threat. The oppression of the nautch girls was vital for Britain's sense of superiority em.

The Myth of David Livingstone and the Protestant Church

By Caleb Sauder

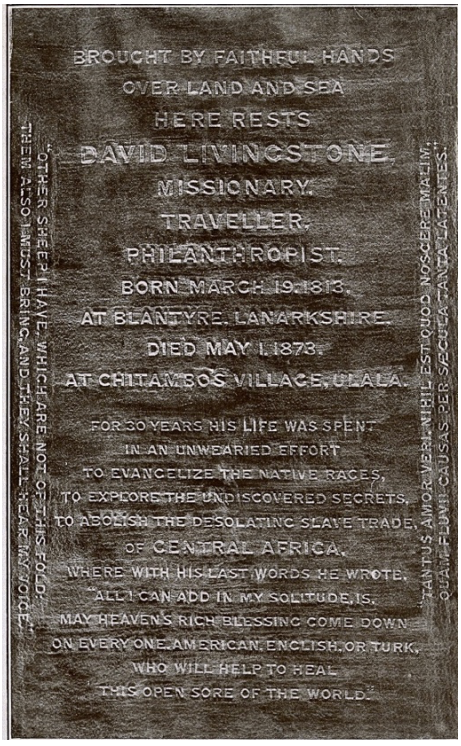

Figure 2 David Livingstone's tombstone which includes John 10:16 on the left in English, and on the right in Latin

Inscription on David Livingstone's Grave at Westminster Abbey. Wikimedia Commons. Wellcome Images, n.d. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Inscr

In 1892, a young missionary named Peter Cameron Scott was forced to return to England from Africa after getting deathly sick. He was deeply discouraged, having been brought back only a few months after first arriving and having to bury his brother, who died from malaria shortly after arriving. His brief time there also opened Scott's eyes to how many people in Africa did not know the gospel, and he desired to return but was not sure how. He found his strength and energy by taking a visit to Westminster Abbey. He visited David Livingstone's tomb and read the verse from John 10, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring". In the presence of a missionary like Livingstone, he was so moved by these words that he felt called to start the African Inland Mission. This missionary organization still exists today.[1] What compelled Scott to visit Livingstone's tomb when he needed inspiration and hope?

Some have said Livingstone was a hero. Many called him a brilliant success, an example to follow, and a model for children to aspire to. His legacy has forever been immortalized by the words "Dr. Livingstone, I presume?" Yet now, in the

[1] Catherine S. Miller, *Peter Cameron Scott: The Unlocked Door. A Biography* (London, 1955), 26. This inspiration that Scott received at Livingstone's tomb was not simply an inspiration. Miller writes that he knelt at the tomb and felt a vision and a commission from God at this exact location.

age of more critical and less hagiographic history, David Livingstone's legacy as a missionary, explorer, and even husband has been under intense scholarly critique.[2] One thing that has been an unchangeable reality, however, is how the British public was enamored with David Livingstone (or rather, the thought of him). His writings, speeches, pictures, and letters circulated rapidly, with almost everyone in the mid-19th century knowing precisely who he was. It is no surprise, then, when studying the church (by this I mean everything; ministers, bishops, journals, magazines, even the physical buildings), that Livingstone appears constantly. The work of these church leaders helped cement Livingstone in the public memory as a hero to be remembered and idealized. Their efforts in praising him while he lived, and in the ceremonies, journals, and eulogies after his death demonstrate the influence that religious figures played in shaping Livingstone for the British Public.

But it was not simply the members of one particular denomination that came out supporting David Livingstone. As Julie Melnyk describes the Victorian era, "it was not an era of peaceful faith and doctrinal conformity – it was an era of religious controversy and, increasingly, of religious freedom."[3] Despite this turmoil among Britain's Protestant churches, many denominations united around the mission and purpose of Livingstone's myth. Prominent Baptist preachers, Anglican bishops, Congregationalist organizations, and Methodist newspapers all came together to show their support for the life and efforts of Livingstone, demonstrating the surprisingly wide appeal of his story.

Background

Livingstone was a man of humble beginnings, born in 1813 in Blantyre, Scotland. His father, Neil, was an unsuccessful tea salesman tasked with feeding his family of seven. Livingstone then, as a result, went to work in cotton mills from an early age. He spent many years working in the mills but attended night school after work to learn Latin and other reading and writing skills. He grew up in a strict religious family as well. His father was a strong Presbyterian who made his family attend a Congregationalist church nearby. Livingstone however, did not necessarily believe in the strict tenets of the conservative Calvinism that he was taught. He read

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[2] Historians have noted that around more critical books emerged after the centenary of Livingstone's death. See R.S. Roberts, "Another Livingstone," *Zambezia* 8, no. 1 (1980): pp. 81. and Gary Clendennen and James A. Casada, "The Livingstone Documentation Project," *History in Africa* 8 (1981): pp. 314. But even after this movement and Jeal's *Livingstone,* books are still published in this fashion. A more recent example would be Janet and Geoff Benge's *David Livingstone Africa's Trailblazer,* (YWAM Pub, 1999), part of the "Christian Heroes: Then and Now" series.

[3] Julie Melnyk, *Victorian Religion : Faith and Life in Britain* (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 2008), 3.

the works of more "liberal theologians" at the time, thus not taking the strict form of his father. This later influenced his choice of missionary society, as the Congregationalist London Missionary Society was willing to work with multiple denominations, just as long as the gospel was preached. At twenty-one years old and still in the mills, he read a pamphlet by Dutch missionary Karl Gutzlaf asking for medical missionaries to China.[4] Livingstone saw this as his way out of the mills and convinced his father to let him go to medical school. He spent two years there, anticipating a journey to China. But due to the Opium Wars closing down travel, he looked to another continent, Africa.

Before he left for Africa, he went to his future father-in-law Robert Moffat for guidance and mentoring. Moffat had already spent considerable time in South Africa and answered many questions for Livingstone about Africa, influencing him to take his missionary work there.[5] In his *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa*, Livingstone credited Moffat for "turn[ing] my thoughts to Africa."[6] In his first twenty years in Africa, his workings were relatively unknown. It was not until he came back in the winter of 1856 did Livingstone start to receive copious amounts of popularity.

Livingstone became extremely popular for two reasons: his geographical exploration and his missionary work. The news of his geographical achievements was unlike anyone had ever heard, and his book, *Missionary Travels*, only made him more of a household name. Over seventy thousand copies were sold. His descriptions of the African "wilderness" and his "discoveries," like that of Victoria Falls, made it impossible for him to walk the streets without getting mobbed. [7] He was also reportedly converting thousands of Africans to Christianity simultaneously.

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[4] Tim Jeal, *Livingstone* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 14.

[5] Andrew Ross, *David Livingstone: Mission and Empire* (London: Continuum, 2006), 20-21. There was a prevalent myth after Livingstone's death about the words that Moffat spoke to him. Moffat wrote that after he told Livingstone of the "smoke of a thousand villages where no missionary had ever been" he wanted to "go at once to Africa." But in all reality, he had already made up his mind that he would go to Africa. See W.G. Blaikie, *The Personal Life of David Livingstone* (London, 1880), 26-27. David Livingstone, *Letter to John Arundel 2 July 1839* (Livingstone Online).

[6] David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa. Including a Sketch of Sixteen Years' Residence in the Interior of Africa ...* (1857), https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1039/1039-h/1039-h.htm.

[7] His discoveries, of course, were known to the Indigenous peoples of Africa but also to Portuguese explorers who did not share what they learned. Tim Jeal, *Livingstone* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 163-164.

For the rest of his life, he lived in relative obscurity. After the 1856 visit, he left the London Missionary Society to join the Royal Geographical Society in his quest to find the source of the Nile. He was responsible for helping found the Universities' Mission to Central Africa (UMCA), which went poorly. He visited England again but with none of the same fanfare he had received earlier. It was not until Henry Morton Stanley found Livingstone in the middle of Africa that his popularity rekindled. Greeting him with the iconic words "Dr. Livingstone, I presume" Stanley threw Livingstone back into international news. Stanley's "discovery" was the first news story to break in both America and Britain. When he died, his body was carried across Africa to be buried in Westminster Abby, while his physical heart stayed in Africa as a symbol of his love for it. After this, the popularity and celebrity of Livingstone were cemented in British culture for the next century.

Historiography

Biographies of David Livingstone were voluminous and extremely popular after his death. But it was not until Tim Jeal's *Livingstone* (1973) that a biographer took a critical look at Livingstone's life and started to separate fact from fiction. Andrew Ross in *David Livingstone: Missions and Empire* (2006), also takes a more critical look at Livingstone's life. But the impact of David Livingstone and the creation of the myth around him has been studied and written by many. Dorothy Helly, in *Livingstone's Legacy* (1987) wrote how Rev. Horace Waller created the myth of David Livingstone. Waller was an Anglican reverend that edited the last journals of Livingstone and changed and inserted his own story to glorify him. In *Empire of Sentiment* (2018), Joanna Lewis explored how the burial of David Livingstone in Westminster Abby was "the four most influential days in the history of imperial propaganda."[8] This creation and legacy of the myth of Livingstone then must fall under John M. MacKenzie's theory of propaganda, how the British Empire was able to win support by "creating a national purpose with a high moral content."[9] But in the end, none of these authors take much time to examine the Christian church's impact in propagating the legend of Livingstone. In a short essay, MacKenzie mentioned the vast diversity of denominations behind him, writing, "he could be, and was, appropriated by any church – Scottish, Nonconformist, Anglican,

[8] Joanna Lewis, *Empire of Sentiment: The Death of Livingstone and the Myth of Victorian Imperialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 63.
[9] John M MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 2.

even, through the efforts of Cardinal Lavigerie, Roman Catholic."[10] While this paper focuses on the Protestant support behind Livingstone, he received it from many locations. Sermons and writings by preachers and pastors are some of the best ways to understand how the rhetoric of David Livingstone was carried out. Numerous transcripts, during and after his death, demonstrate not the power and impact that Livingstone had, but how prevalent they were in the culture at the time.

During his life

After spending his first twenty years in Africa, Livingstone returned to England in 1856 for the first time. During this time, he received widespread recognition for his achievements. He was given an audience with the Queen and given honors from the Royal Geographical Society and Oxford University. He published his *Missionary Travels,* which got thousands of readers. His success and popularity can be credited to two potential reasons: his geographical success and his missionary success. His work as an explorer and geographer was impressive, having walked across Africa, and discovered Victoria Falls. His success as a missionary, however, is much more dubious. It was commonly thought that he had been converting thousands of Africans to Christianity, but in reality, he only had one convert. A few comments must be made about Livingstone and his lone conversion to Christianity. First, it is not fair to judge the results of a missionary simply by the converts that they have, as "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."[11] Secondly, it was a common missionary practice of the time to focus on the leader of a tribe and hope to convert him, hoping that the influence and power that they held would help convert others. Livingstone's only convert was "Chief Sechele of the Kwena". So, while only having one convert may be seen as meager results, there would have been success in the conversion of a chief (a lifelong one at that).[12] Unfortunately, that convert was quickly excommunicated (removed from the membership of the church).[13] He was able to get away with this lack of conversions by simply never addressing the rumors, and his silence could have been seen as humility.[14] But of all the talks and speeches that he gave, none were more

[10] John M MacKenzie, "David Livingstone: the Construction of the Myth," in *Sermons and Battle Hymns: Protestant Popular Culture in Modern Scotland*, ed. Graham Walker and Tom Gallagher (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), pp. 24-42, 31.
[11] Lk 10:15 KJV
[12] See Bengt Sundkler and Christopher Steed, *A History of the Church in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 435-436,464.
[13] While excommunication certainly has its negative connotations, Chief Sechele was removed for polygamy (which Livingstone begrudgingly enforced.) See Sundkler and Steed, *Church in Africa,* 436. and Tim Jeal, *Livingstone,* 80-81.
[14]Tim Jeal, *Livingstone* 164.

impactful that the two lectures that he gave at the University of Cambridge on December 4th, 1857. The first lecture that he gave was to the many students in the University, telling them of his explorations within Africa, but also how he was "to instruct the natives in a knowledge of Christianity."[15] It was this lecture that he also spoke of his desire "to open a path to this district (speaking of Zambesi, his upcoming trip destination) that civilization, commerce, and Christianity might find their way there."[16] He then concluded his lecture with the calling "I beg you to direct your attention to Africa- I know that in a few years I shall be cut off in that country, which is now open; do not let it be shut again! I go back to Africa to try to make open a path of commerce and Christianity; do you carry out the work which I have begun. I leave it with you!" These words had a profound effect on those who heard them, as is evidenced by the actions of those listening.

The first impact was the continuation of the mission theory of "Christianity and Commerce."[17] This concept of Christianity and Commerce was a common phrase among Christian circles, and this phrase is undoubtedly credited to Livingstone.[18] There were many reasons to present both "commerce and the gospel." As a passionate advocate for the abolition of slavery in Africa, "Christianity and Commerce" was seen as the only way to stop it. He argued that indigenous peoples were "very desirous of trading, but their only traffic is slaves" and so to change their trading from enslaved people to goods, there must be an "introduction of Christianity and commerce."[19] Livingstone also saw it as the best way to civilize Africa, as commerce had been brought in India without Christianity, which was why (in his mind) there was a Revolution in 1857.[20]

Livingstone's influence can be demonstrated in the speeches of Anglican Reverend Samuel Wilberforce, in many of his speeches on Missions. He was the third son of the famous abolitionist William Wilberforce and was heavily involved in

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[15] David Livingstone, *Dr. Livingstone's Cambridge Lectures,* 7.
[16] David Livingstone, *Dr. Livingstone's Cambridge Lectures,* 18.
[17] Some authors will use "civilization, Christianity, and commerce" but this phrase was only used once by Livingstone. He then seemed to use commerce and civilization interchangeably.
[18] As Brian Stanley points out in his article, the theory of "Commerce and Christianity" was certainly around before Livingstone spoke of it. But simply due to Livingstone's popularity and the impact of his words on future missions, he is often tied to this phrase. See Brian Stanley, "'Commerce and Christianity': Providence Theory, the Missionary Movement, and the Imperialism of Free Trade, 1842–1860," *The Historical Journal* 26, no. 1 (1983): pp. 71-94, https://doi.org/10.1017/s0018246x00019609, 72.
[19] David Livingstone, *Dr. Livingstone's Cambridge Lectures,*21.
[20] David Livingstone, *Dr. Livingstone's Cambridge Lectures,*18-19.

missionary work, including the Universities' Mission to Central Africa and the Bishop of Oxford. He continued to push and endorse this idea of commerce and Christianity in many of his speeches. In 1859, he gave a lecture in which he wrote, "Commerce… is a might machinery laid down in the wants of man by the Almighty Creator of all things, to promote the intercourse and communion of one race with another" and that when it is paired with Christianity, they will carry the "blessings of religion which are the chiefest of all possessions."[21] In the following year, he gave a whole lecture on the connection between commerce and the gospel, remarking how the Apostle Paul even capitalized upon this connection. Paul chose to base his ministry in Corinth and Ephesus, which were two "great centres[sic] of population" and so a means for the gospel to spread. There was not simply a logical tie now, but theological backing to their methods of evangelizing. By endorsing and logically supporting the means and methods of Livingstone's missionary work, Wilberforce implicitly was giving Livingstone a good reputation.

Wilberforce would also explicitly support Livingstone too. In one lecture, he introduces Livingstone as this "good and marvellous[sic] man", who is trying to open up Africa to the "united errand of healing" that "commerce, civilization, and Christianity" bring.[22] When lecturing in 1858, he once again mentions the work that "God has put… into the heart of a man like Dr. Livingstone". Throughout many more of Wilberforce's speeches and sermons, Livingstone's name is praised and revered as God's sent and chosen one to do wonderful things in Africa. It is worth mentioning that Wilberforce did have a relationship with Livingstone. In some of his lectures, he mentions personal letters from Livingstone to him, eleven being sent in total. But when the timing of those letters is considered (from 1857-1865, the duration of Livingstone's involvement with the UMCA) this relationship was not one of strong companionship. As future sermons and lectures will show, ministers, reference Livingstone without meeting him.

The second profound effect of Livingstone's Cambridge lecture was the forming of the Anglican Universities' Mission to Central Africa. This mission was initially named the "Oxford and Cambridge Mission to Central Africa" and was founded two years after the Cambridge Lectures but credits its creation from Livingstone's speech. It differed from the London Missionary Society in couple of ways, mainly that the LMS was a more international mission while the UMCA was explicitly to Africa, and that the LMS, while Congregationalist, was willing to work with many denominations and the UMCA was Anglican. In their pioneering

[21] Samuel Wilberforce, *Speeches on Missions.,* ed. Henry Rowley (London: W.W. Gardner, 1874), 176-177.
[22] Samuel Wilberforce, *Speeches on Missions.,* ed. Henry Rowley (London: W.W. Gardner, 1874), 30-31.

meeting, their minutes report that "The Mission owes its origin, under God, to the impression produced by the visit of Dr. Livingstone to this University."[23] The beginnings of this myth and celebrity were already present at the UMCA's foundation. Livingstone had "performed great feats and undergone great labours" and was "animated by the trust missionary spirit." The irony of this statement is, again, the lack of missionary work that Livingstone did, but also because Livingstone left the London Missionary Society to join the Royal Geographical Society in hopes of finding the source of the Nile, and finding a 'highway' to connect the northern and southern portions of Africa. His missionary work after his Cambridge lectures was very limited compared to before 1856.

During Livingstone's life, the creation of his glorified myth was prevalent in other sermons and church works as well. The London Missionary Society's journal, *the Missionary Magazine and Chronicle* was a fitting example of how they championed Livingstone's work. A Congregationalist society, they were interdenominational in whom they employed in their various missions. While not even mentioned their 1853 or 1855 editions of the journal, he takes center stage in their 1860 edition. They use Livingstone to show how he has opened the way for even more missionaries to make their way to Africa, as he was the "pioneer for other missionaries" and made an undocumented land into a place to send two groups of missionaries.[24] Why would the LMS continue to write and make known the works of Livingstone? Jeal explains that the LMS was in need of funding, and so by continuing to use Livingstone's name, they hoped to make up for monetary losses that the currently had.[25] While the 1860 Journal never mentions the absence of Livingstone from their staff, they do mention how Livingstone's first expeditions were "sustained by the funds of our Society."[26] They continued the myth for some monetary gain so that they could continue with their mission.

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[23] Rev. Dr. Terry Brown, ed., "Meeting at Cambridge, Tuesday, Nov. 1, 1859.," Oxford and Cambridge Mission to Central Africa (1859), 2008, http://anglicanhistory.org/africa/umca/meeting1859.html.
[24] Directors of the London Missionary Society, *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle*, 1860, 270.
[25] Tim Jeal, *Livingstone* 164.
[26] *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle*, 1.

Charles Spurgeon and David Livingstone

But of all the advocates for Livingstone, very few, if any authors take time to mention how the sermons the Reformed Baptist minister, Charles Haddon Spurgeon endorsed Livingstone and his legacy. Only Clare Pettitt mentions him in her book *Dr. Livingstone, I Presume?* by referencing him in passing during her introduction.[27] Often called the "Prince of Preachers," Spurgeon was one of the most popular pastors during the late 19th century. Even from the early age of nineteen, he was recognized with a great gift of speaking, and was invited to minister to the New Park Street Chapel. After time there, he started to give sermons in great lecture halls, like Exeter Hall, which would hold thousands of attendees.[28] He eventually pastored his congregation at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, where he would minister to over five thousand congregants for one sermon. In addition to his large speaking audiences, his sermons were also published in the newspaper and sold twenty-five thousand copies weekly. When he died in 1892, it had been estimated that he spoke to over ten million people in his lifetime. [29] Even during his lifetime, he was recognized and known as a great speaker, even recognized by the readers of one magazine as one of the best living preachers.[30] When Spurgeon then included and mentioned Livingstone in his sermons, it was not just any preacher but one of the best and most well-known.

Figure two is a great visual representation of the popularity of the sermons and lectures of that Spurgeon would give. This drawing was first included in a published collection of his sermons in 1859. The Surrey Gardens music hall was one of the outstanding performance venues in London at the time, known for putting on famous plays and symphonies. Spurgeon could also completely pack the house. A tragic example of this was in 1856, full of ten to twelve thousand people, someone started shouting "Fire, Fire" during Spurgeon's sermon. Seven people were trampled

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[27] Clare Pettitt, *Dr Livingstone I Presume: Missionaries, Journalists, Explorers and Empire* (London: Profile, 2013), 24.
[28] Patricia Stallings Kruppa, "The Life & Times of Charles H. Spurgeon," Christian History | Learn the History of Christianity & the Church (Christianity Today, January 1, 1991), https://www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-29/life-times-of-charles-h-spurgeon.html.
[29] Eric W. Hayden, "Charles H. Spurgeon: Did You Know?" Christian History | Learn the History of Christianity & the Church (Christianity Today, January 1, 1991), https://www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-29/charles-h-spurgeon-did-you-know.html.
[30] "A Plebiscite about Preachers," *The Spectator*, October 4, 1884, pp. 12-13, http://archive.spectator.co.uk/article/4th-october-1884/12/a-pltbiscite-about-preachers.

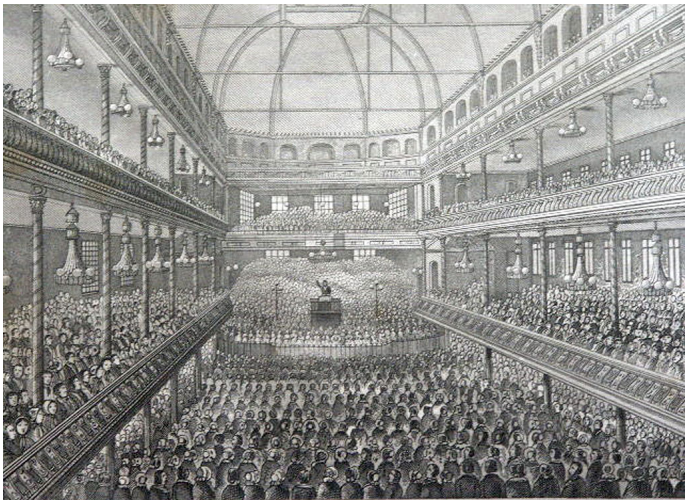

Figure 3 A drawing from 1859 depicting Charles Spurgeon speaking at the Surrey Music Hall with not a seat open.
Charles Spurgeon at Surrey Gardens. Wikimedia Commons.
Spurgeon's Sermons Fifth Series; Sheldon & Co. 1858., n.d.

to death, and many others were hospitalized by the mass of people moving.[31] But even after the tragic aftermath, Spurgeon continued to draw large numbers of people to the biggest venues.

Spurgeon used Livingstone in his sermons both before and after Livingstone's death, but it is important to see how Spurgeon propagated the myth of Livingstone while he was still alive.[32] The first sermon that Livingstone is mentioned was in 1857, where he spoke of Moffat and Livingstone "laboring in Africa with great success and many have been converted".[33] Here, as mentioned earlier, Livingstone was seen with great success, even when it was never officially announced. The context of this quote makes it even more striking. Spurgeon was speaking about the continuation and growth of the global Christian church and was making a point about how military might (specifically the British military in India) was hindering the furtherance of the gospel. Thus Livingstone, by working where there was no colonizer, was having more success. The irony is that Livingstone's mission of Christianity and commerce would inevitably lead to British involvement and colonization.

Spurgeon would reference Livingstone three more times before Livingstone passed away in 1873. Each time Spurgeon included him, he did it in an unique way. In an 1861 sermon titled "The March", Moffat and Livingstone are mentioned as being in the midst of Africa, petitioning for God's protection and strength as they spread the gospel. In an 1860 sermon, "A Refreshing Canticle" it becomes clear that

[31] "The Rev. C. H. Spurgeon at the Surrey Music Hall," *Sheffield Independent*, October 25, 1856, https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000181/18561025/051/0012.
[32] In some sermons, Spurgeon refers to John Livingstone of the Shotts Revival in 1630, but the distinction can be made easily as he always refers to the missionary as "Dr."
[33] Charles Haddon Spurgeon (August 31, 1857), https://www.spurgeongems.org/sermon/chs149.pdf.

Livingstone was a pop culture reference to his audience, in the same way a modern pastor might reference Marvel or The Lord of the Rings. He took Livingstone's experience of seeing Victoria Falls, something that would be so impressive and glorious, that it would be impossible to forget. "So, it is with the love of Christ" Spurgeon said.[34] Lastly, he makes such an interesting connection to Livingstone, when speaking of the use of hornets in the Old Testament. Spurgeon made a connection to the tsetse fly that Livingstone spoke about both in this Cambridge lecture, and especially in his *Missionary Travels.* This fly was notorious for killing large numbers of large animals; in one instance he lost ten oxen simply because they wandered into a small area that contained them.[35] The nature of the references that Spurgeon made of Livingstone was significant. While he vaguely references Livingstone at times, the specificity of his references is striking. His audience had to know enough about Livingstone to understand the analogies that Spurgeon made, otherwise references to Victoria Falls and the tsetsefly become utterly useless to his audience.

Leading up to his death

Livingstone's popularity had faded by the mid to late 1860s. He went for prolonged periods of time being completely unheard of. Many also thought that he was dead. The Universities' Mission to Central Africa, which he was responsible for inspiring, also did not help build his reputation. Charles Mackenzie, a bishop in the Anglican church, led the first expedition of the UCMA. They met up with Livingstone in Africa, and he tried to find an easy access point to Central Africa but was unsuccessful. After some delays, they finally made it inland, and as part of the mission of Christianity and Commerce, freed eighty-four slaves along the way. But this involved them in local politics and they fought in a skirmish, killing men on both sides. Then disaster struck this expedition again as malaria hit its men hard killing Mackenzie in the process.[36] Hearing of this only upset the leadership of the UMCA, with Rev. Selwyn giving the most stinging response. In an address to the directors, he wrote "I asked myself, 'Is that the letter of an officer in the army, or of a Christian Bishop?'"[37] Other members as well, such as Henry Rowley also gave scathing reviews of Livingstone's (and the UCMA's) actions.

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[34] Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1860), https://www.spurgeongems.org/sermon/chs2794.pdf.
[35] David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels* 1857.
[36] Frank Winspear, "A Short History of the Universities Mission to Central Africa," *The Nyasaland Journal* 9, no. 1 (January 1956), https://www.jstor.org/stable/29545756.
[37] "The Universities to Central Africa," *Cambridge Independent Press*, July 26, 1862, p. 2,

In between this failure of the UMCA, and the "discovery" of Livingstone, he almost completely disappeared from the public's eye. There were years of little to no publicity for Livingstone, even a trip back to England in which no fanfare or awards greeted him unlike his first visit home. When he left for that final time, he was determined to find the source of the Nile for sure, and end the Arab slave trade in the process.[38] But it was the false death reports, on top of his choice of seclusion, that made Livingstone vanish. Reports of his death started appearing in numbers in 1867 that he had been killed by a tribe in Africa.[39] He had slowly been forgotten by the British public.

Livingstone's popularity rebounded however after Henry Morton Stanley found him. How stunning the news would have been to those who believed he was dead! Stanley, a writer originally from Scotland like Livingstone but raised in the United States, was assigned to find Livingstone, and undertook a very dangerous expedition. After six months of traveling throughout the African landscape, doing his best to try to track down Livingstone, he was finally able to find him. In one of the first news stories to break on both sides of the Atlantic, the *New York Herald* proclaimed the news that Livingstone had been found. This catapulted both Stanley and Livingstone back into the public eye and gave Stanley a lot of recognition for his accomplishment.

After his death

The events after his death greatly impacted the myth surrounding Livingstone for over a century, and his funeral was the most influential. Lewis calls the days around Livingstone's funeral the "four most influential days in history of imperial propaganda"[40] And while Lewis is making the connection between Livingstone, Christianity, and the expansion of the empire, this propaganda to expand empire was in the end about Livingstone. The first piece of this puzzle was the burial location. Westminster Abbey was not simply another church or mausoleum to be buried in, but one of the premier Anglican houses of worship during the 19th century. It is the where the coronations take place and carries so much British history that "it represents a community's values and memories."[41] Just by comparing the list

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https://go.gale.com/ps/i.do?p=BNCN&u=ilstu_milner&id=GALE|ID3233519660&v=2.1&it=r&sid=bookmark-BNCN&asid=77972f6c.

[38] Tim Jeal, *Livingstone*, 293.

[39] "Confirmatory News of the Death of Dr Livingstone," *Stirling Observer*, June 27, 1867, p. 6, https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000474/18670627/044/0006.

[40] Joanna Lewis, *Empire of Sentiment*, 63.

[41] Richard Jenkyns, *Westminster Abbey* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 3.

of notable names buried in its hallowed halls gives a sense of the honor that is buried inside Westminster. Mary Queen of Scotts, Alfred Tennyson, George Handel, Muzio Clementi, Isaac Newton, Charles Darwin; this list of names is simply a portion of the notable and historically significant figures buried in Westminster Abbey, and so for Livingstone to be buried in such a place certainly adds a level of notoriety to his name.

The funeral was highly publicized, with thousands of attendees in the streets, mourning Livingstone as he passed by with his funeral procession. There was also lots of crying and wailing as his body passed through the streets, when they saw the coffin. [42] Eventually, the procession made its way to Westminster, where tickets to the funeral were sold out. The Dean of Westminster, A.P. Stanley (no relation to H.M Stanley), then gave a long sermon that continued on the myth of Livingstone in front of many witnesses. In typical fashion, he took time to note Livingstone's geographical and missional work. About his explorations, Stanley spoke how Livingstone's revelations transformed "a howling wilderness to the glory of Lebanon".[43] But he also was magnanimous regarding Livingstone's missionary achievements and his work for the church and gospel. It is also worth noting that Livingstone was not Anglican, yet Dean Stanley had no qualms not only supporting but endorsing his work. This probably can be explained by the fact that the UCMA was officially an Anglican mission that Livingstone was deeply involved in, but it is not something to overlook. Livingstone's family asked for a separate private ceremony by Rev. H.W Hamilton from the Church of Scotland.

The Right Reverend Horace Waller also played a very large role in continuing the Livingstone myth. Waller had decided to going the UMCA after Livingstone's call in 1857, and was a missionary for them in Africa for a few years. While there, a small friendship between himself and Livingstone developed, and he began to truly see Livingstone as his hero. After the death of Livingstone, he was given responsibility for editing the personal journals of Dr. Livingstone by his surviving family. While not as popular as his *Missionary Travels*, they still sold just under ten thousand copies of the two-volume set in the first year.[44] Waller went to great lengths to censure what he thought not appropriate. He would remove

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[42] Joanna Lewis, *Empire of Sentiment*, 68.

[43] "Funeral of the Late Dr. Livingstone," *Nature* 9, no. 234 (April 23, 1874), 486. This reference to the "glory of Lebanon" is quite an obscure one, only found in a couple of places in the book of Isaiah. Lebanon was known in biblical times to have enormous amounts of forests and timber, and could have been seen as a standard for "earthly majesty" See Faithlife Study Bible, Isaiah 60:13

[44] Dorothy O. Helly, *Livingstone's Legacy: Horace Waller and Victorian Mythmaking* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1987), 193.

comments that Livingstone made about race, different comments he made about the sexuality that he observed, or just passing comments of living people. As Helly puts it, Waller was "conscious of a duty to ensure that Livingstone's fame was in no way diminished."[45] His work editing the journals was quite significant, not simply for what he took out, but also what he put into it. One of the great myths of Livingstone was the position in which he died. Waller felt it was important to include the last actions and parts of Livingstone's life in these accounts, as was typical of many Victorian Literature during this time.[46] The one issue was that Livingstone died alone with no witnesses. The image he created would be cemented in public memory for some time. Livingstone, in great and unbearable pain from his malaria and dysentery, moved very little at all. But Waller then describes that in one last burst of energy, he "had not merely turned himself, he had risen to pray; he still rested on his knees, his hands were clasped under his head… He had not fallen to right or left when he rendered his spirit to God…for the Travellers' perfect rest had come." [47] This last part of Livingstone's account was not his journals. Still, Waller's insertion into the narrative. And while it is supposed to have taken from the accounts of Livingstone's "faithful followers" Chuma and Susi (these were Livingstone's assistants, that were often credited with bringing Livingstone's body from Africa to the coast), Waller spent remarkable time writing and re-writing the death scene until it was up to his liking.[48] The power behind this image was hard to truly grasp. How easy is it for one person's character to be summed up by "he died doing what he loved"? Livingstone's death on his knees in prayer exemplifies this perfectly. This was a powerful mental image for many of the supporters of Livingstone, and it would not be long until visual representations of his death scene were propagated.

The sermons after his death also continued to support the myth and popular legacy of David Livingstone. Charles Spurgeon continued to be a fantastic example of this, with many sermons after 1874 praising Livingstone. The tone he used to describe Livingstone changed however in these sermons. Instead of using Livingstone as a popular culture reference, he uses Livingstone as a way to inspire the younger members of his audience to greatness. In one sermon in 1874, and again in 1888, Spurgeon spoke of how members of the audience have now way of knowing how God will transform and use their life for his purpose. "That boy converted a

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[45] Dorothy O. Helly, *Livingstone's Legacy: Horace Waller and Victorian* 153.
[46] Dorothy O. Helly, *Livingstone's Legacy*, 108,
[47] David Livingstone and Horace Waller, *The Last Journals of David Livingstone in Central Africa* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1875), 514. It is also interesting how Waller specifically says "had not fallen to right or left" for he seems to be making a connection to some Bible verses which warn do not turn to the right or left, but follow straight in God's path (Deut. 5:32 and Prov. 4:27)
[48] Dorothy O. Helly, *Livingstone's Legacy*, 111,

week ago, may become a Moffat or a Livingstone… You cannot tell whither the Spirit goes."[49] In one other sermon, Spurgeon spoke of the honor that it was for him to meet Livingstone, and lauded him for choosing to go, serve, work, and then die in Africa. [50] As mentioned before, the staggering popularity of Spurgeon does not make these something to ignored or passed over, but to be seriously considered a serious method in which the myth was continued.

The myth and popularity surrounding Livingstone were not limited to Britain too, however, as there is even American writing that told of the wonders that he had done. In three years, three pastors wrote in the Methodist *Christian Advocate* about Livingstone and his achievements. One article, written shortly after Livingstone's funeral, was extremely complimentary, praising both Livingstone's efforts to end the slave trade, and "opening up the whole of the interior of Africa to the Gospel."[51] These authors, writing in a Christian magazine, give grand descriptions of the geographical and exploratory work done by Livingstone almost exclusively, however. Their emphasis of his missionary work was also different in that the focused on the slave trade it more than other British authors did.[52] While there is no way to know for sure, this emphasis on the slave trade could be because of the American Civil War that would have ended less than ten years prior. But in the end, this myth of Livingstone continued in the Americas as well as in Britain.

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[49] Charles Haddon Spurgeon (March 19, 1874), https://www.spurgeongems.org/sermon/chs1164.pdf. This also seems to perpetuate the rags to riches story that Livingstone was known for as well.

[50] Charles Haddon Spurgeon (September 11, 1881), https://www.spurgeongems.org/sermon/chs1620.pdf.

[51] Rev. L. R. Dunn, "David Livingstone," *The Christian Advocate*, July 9, 1874, https://www.proquest.com/docview/125978865/DFB0AC990F08443APQ/1?accountid=11578.

[52] J Wesley Horne, "The Livingstone Letters," *Christian Advocate* 47, no. 33 (August 15, 1872): p. 257, https://www.proquest.com/docview/125943252/DFB0AC990F08443APQ/4?accountid=11578. And
Rev. Geo Lansing Taylor, "Livingstone's Last, and the Last of Livingstone," *Christian Advocate* 50, no. 20 (May 20, 1875): p. 153, https://www.proquest.com/docview/125937592/DFB0AC990F08443APQ/2?accountid=11578.

Conclusion

The church shaped the myth of Livingstone in a variety of ways. Through various forms of communication, like sermons, lectures, and writings, or through the roles that ministers played in the editing of writing. Even the physical location of where he was buried, and the role of Westminster Abbey, were crucial in how the British public saw Livingstone then and continued to see him for the next century. What is most remarkable is that this influence crossed denominational lines. Westminster and the UCMA were Anglican, Spurgeon was Reformed Baptist, the London Missionary Society was Congregationalist interdenominational, the *Christian Advocate* was Methodist, and Livingstone grew up deeply Presbyterian household. While all Protestant, the striking uniformity and support behind his story is impressive, showing his work's wide-ranging appeal. Yet, the work on Livingstone and the church is nowhere near its conclusion. Future writers and historians should continue to look at how the church shaped Livingstone, how his myth influenced the church and its doctrine, and how the British Catholic church was involved in Livingstone's story.

Persistence and Pain: The Work of Reunification and the Gendered Implications of Freedom

By Isabella Lethbridge

As he moved through South Carolina in the winter of 1865, one white traveler observed that were you to ask almost any of the freedpeople "what they are going to do this winter, he will answer you, 'I'se got a sister-- a wife or a mother, as the case might be-- 'in Virginia, and I'm going to look her up and fetch her home."[1] Emancipation was an event as metamorphic as it was joyous. No longer trapped within the bounds of the institution of slavery, black Americans faced a new era, one in which they were regarded not as property but as people. Freedom, however, asked as many questions as it answered, particularly in the realm of the family. To be a slave was to be denied autonomy; slave marriages were no exception. Thus, in the years following emancipation, black Americans, in accepting their newfound freedom, were forced to contend with the legacies of an institution that operated around the interests of the white planter class. Gaining a holistic understanding of the nature of black families during the Reconstruction era demands an examination of the questions freedom posed regarding the personal lives of the freedpeople—questions that they themselves were not reticent to answer or unable to grapple with. Black Americans made a concentrated effort to form both communal and familial units in the years following emancipation, working to rebuild communities torn apart by an institution that had little regard for their humanity and to bring home, as that white traveler had observed, those they had been cruelly torn away from.

Contrary to the central argument of the infamous Moynihan Report, that the black family unit was "destroyed" by slavery, or that white America "broke the will of the Negro people," there exists considerable historical evidence demonstrating the strength, resilience, willingness, and determination of black families to engage in the labor required to either rebuild or create from the ground up both kinship networks and intimate communities.[2] Hot off the heels of the Report, sociologist Andrew Billingsley argued in 1968 that the black family of the past and present is and was able to "develop viable forms of family life," though "circumscribed by powerful social forces which prevent the Negro family from making its maximum contribution

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[1] Andrew Billingsley, *Black Families and the Struggle for Survival: Teaching Our Children to Walk Tall* (New York: Friendship Press, 1974), 51.

[2] Daniel P Moynihan, *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*, (Library of Congress: 1965), in Herbert G. Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom: 1750-1925* (North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1977, passim.

to its members, to the Negro community as a whole, and to the wider society."[3] These powerful forces did certainly exist; a plethora of historical evidence demonstrates how black Americans were socially, politically, and economically dominated and subjugated under white supremacy. However, an equal amount of evidence highlights the willpower and determination of black families to persist in their search for those they had loved and lost touch with as well as to establish communities and cultural centers in their own right.

Reframing kinship networks, exemplified through "Information Wanted" advertisements and black churches, allows us to turn a new eye to the methods utilized by black families to reunite with one another. While much of the literature present on the topic examines the character of these black families upon emancipation, what is often lost is what can only be called the "work" of reunification many freedpeople engaged in-- with, in some cases, great success. Raymond Gavins asserted that black "families survived," evidenced through "freedmen and women [legitimizing] slave marriages and children, [sustaining] two-parent households, and [taking] in displaced relatives while they and their posterity faced sharecropping, Jim Crow, and penury."[4] An additional piece by Andrew Billingsley, *Black Families and the Struggle for Survival,* looked at these kinship networks, particularly the black church, as further evidence against Moynihan's assertions and as proof of black sites of community and independence.[5] In *A Short History of Reconstruction,* Eric Foner echoed these assertions about the importance of the black church and its centrality to the black community as it served as a site of education, social events, and political gatherings.[6] To best understand the implications of kinship, scholars need to refine their assessment of the *individual's* role in the community, taking a bottom-up rather than top-down approach.

These revisionist scholars, working to contest Moynihan's school of thought that argued slavery had wrought the destruction of the black family unit, presented evidence that demonstrated how black families persisted and claimed that Reconstruction should not be deemed a failure in the realm of family life. However, a post-revisionist frame of reference emerged from their school that argued that though the family unit did survive, it was not without its dark underbelly. A holistic

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[3] Andrew Billingsley, *Black Families in White America* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1968), 195, 194.
[4] Raymond Gavins, *The Cambridge Guide to African American History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 95.
[5] Andrew Billingsley, *Black Families and the Struggle for Survival: Teaching Our Children to Walk Tall*.
[6] Eric Foner, *A Short History of Reconstruction* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 95.

understanding of the black experience during the Reconstruction era can never be gained without examining these shortcomings, particularly the double-edged sword of patriarchy that allocated freedom in a different sense to black women than it did to black men.

This is a topic not altogether unaddressed by historians. Brenda E. Stevenson, in her chapter within *Beyond Freedom*, presented the argument that marriage following emancipation served generally as a primary success of Reconstruction as well as a means through which distinctive gender roles emerged that broke free from those ascribed to black men and women during slavery.[7] What she did not discuss, however, is how these roles permitted the continued discrimination toward and subjugation of black women. Herbert G. Gutman in *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom* spoke to the ways this intersection of race and gender uniquely hurt black women as they were, unlike black men, forced in some cases to navigate relationships with their former white masters in the years following emancipation because many women were forced to bear their children.[8] Jaqueline Jones's book *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present* added to this scholarship and touched on how black women were victimized by a larger system that continued to encourage and profit off their labor, as well as-- most significantly to the argument presented here-- how black women were subjected to abuse at home at the hands of their black husbands.[9] Donna L. Franklin examined in her research how marital and family ties were profitable to slaveholders and echoed many of Jones's findings surrounding the ways the gender roles of Reconstruction benefitted black men at the expense of black women.[10] While many sources have touched on the repercussions the solidification of the patriarchy had on newly freed black women, a full and interconnected picture is hard to draw from any single piece of literature on the topic. Ultimately, this piece seeks to achieve two ends, the first being to both examine in detail and bring to an individual level the "work" of reunification many families faced in the years following emancipation. This vantage point of "work" and the centering of individual stories allows for the creation of a comprehensive and personal picture of a much larger narrative that could only be told through the amalgamation of the experiences of a

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[7] Brenda E. Stevenson, "Us never had no big funerals or weddin's on de place: Ritualizing Black Marriage in the Wake of Freedom" in *Beyond Freedom,* ed. Stephen Berry and Amy Murrell Taylor (Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2017), 49, 51, 55.
[8] Herbert G. Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom: 1750-1925* (North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1977), passim.
[9] Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present (*New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1985), passim.
[10] Donna L. Franklin, *Ensuring Inequality: The Structural Transformation of the African American Family* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), passim.

broader community. While it is clear that black families persisted in their searches for one another and survived as a result, what cannot be missing from our understanding of Reconstruction is a holistic understanding of how black women, emerging from the bonds of slavery, were subject to a secondary injustice through their subjugation by the role within the family unit and social structure ascribed to them.

While we cannot view black families and marriages in the Reconstruction era as untouched by slavery, we also cannot view them as defined by it. Undeniably, white supremacy influenced the shape black families took in the years following emancipation, but that shape was one driven nonetheless by the black actors that constructed these unions themselves. The powerlessness of enslavement meant that black Americans' marriages before emancipation were characterized by sexual terror and a complete and utter lack of autonomy. Because of this, countless partners were separated, and for many freedpeople of the Reconstruction era, newspapers and black churches were indispensable avenues through which black families orchestrated reunions across long distances and after extended periods of time. Black churches served as both "spiritual organisms" as well as "the reservoir of the emerging African American culture and the primary channel through which it was transmitted"; thus, black churches served as an essential conduit through which black families found one another and additionally played a crucial role in determining the shape these reunited families took.[11]

Moreover, churches, political developments, and the Freedmen's Bureau worked to the advantage of the freedmen by establishing a patriarchal family structure in which black women were expected to be subservient and submissive to the needs and desires of the male head of the household. This promulgation of patriarchal norms had tangible effects, and black women found themselves at best deferent to and at worst abused by their husbands. Additionally important to note is that black families were in some cases interracial, given that the sexual terror imposed by chattel slavery meant that black women were in many instances forced to bear children from their white masters. In the years following emancipation, black women issued complaints of abuse toward their black partners as well as their former masters, demonstrable evidence of how the intersection of race and gender had profound effects on the lives of black women and their experiences with freedom in the Reconstruction era.

While these abuses and inequalities are not to be ignored, the autonomy and social authority granted by emancipation to the freedpeople was perhaps best

[11] Harold E. Cheatham and James B. Stewart, *Black Families: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 1990), 36.

exemplified by their ability to form unions and families. The ability of black women to issue complaints within a legitimate social institution like the Freedmen's Bureau was additionally an essential indication of how emancipation granted greater autonomy and social clout to black Americans as they began to craft lives not yet free from the ties to but undoubtedly free from the bonds of the inhumane system of chattel slavery.

The defining element of many marriages between black Americans during enslavement was a lack of choice. As one former slave put it, "If master seen two slaves together too much he would tell 'em dey was married.

> It didn't make no difference if you wanted to or not; he would put you in de same cabin an' make you live together… Marsa used to sometimes pick our wives fo' us. If he didn't have on his place enough women for the men, he would wait on de side of de road till a big wagon loaded with slaves come by. Den Marsa would stop de ole nigger-trager and buy you a woman. Wasn't no use tryin' to pick one, cause Marsa wasn't gonna pay so much for her. All he wanted was a young healthy one who looked like she could have children, whether she was purty or ugly as sin."[12]

While this lack of choice in a marriage partner was undeniably dehumanizing, several historians, in contesting Moynihan's assertion that the family unit was destroyed through slavery-- have subsequently asserted that the encouragement of familial ties was profitable for slaveholders, who thus were quick to form through force from above marriages and childbearing unions. Eugene Genovese emphasized that masters "understood the strength of marital status and family ties among the slaves as a powerful means of social control."[13] Drew Gilpin Faust supported this assertion, contending that "the correlation between positive family ties and a reduction in escape attempts did not go unnoticed by the slave owner."[14] The slave family was, as argued by Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman, "the basic unit of social organization under slavery and it was in the economic interest of planters to encourage the stability of slave families." Slave marriages, though "explicitly denied" under legal codes, "were promoted and recognized under plantation codes."[15] Thus, despite the absence of free will enslaved Americans faced when it

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[12] Milton Meltzer, *In Their Own Words: A History of the American Negro 1619-1865* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1964), 46-47.
[13] Franklin, *Ensuring Inequality: The Structural Transformation of the African American Family*, 11.
[14] Ibid., 13.
[15] ibid., 9.

came to their marriage partners, it cannot be understated that this fact was no guarantee of the destruction of the family unit itself.

The survival of black family units is well demonstrated within the historical record, for in spite of this lack of autonomy in selecting a partner, the records of the Freedmen's Bureau illustrate that many couples who married during enslavement were quick to recognize their long-standing unions. One such couple, Isaac Diggs and Letty Smith, were originally married in 1825 in Loudon County, Virginia under the supervision of their former master. They had their marriage legally registered in November of 1866, at which point they had been together for 41 years and raised 11 children. Another couple, Andrew Smith and Matilda Miles, were married only a year after Diggs and Smith in 1826 and similarly had their union legally recognized in 1866; they were initially married in Prince George's County, Maryland, and had 9 children together. A third couple by the names of Daniel Sanford and Louisa Williams were married as early as 1815 in Fauquier County, Virginia, and they had ten children at their time of registry in April of 1867-- after 52 years spent together.[16] Choice in a marriage partner was undoubtedly not a privilege enjoyed by enslaved Americans. However, this did not mean that strong familial bonds did not form despite the conditions under which they began, as indicated by the fact that many freedpeople enjoyed following emancipation legal recognition for their unions hitherto unacknowledged in any official sphere.

Many freedpeople, however, were not so lucky as to have remained close to those they loved. The brutal nature of the system of chattel slavery meant that family separations were not uncommon. Slaves were, first and foremost, property, and thus masters did with them what they saw fit to achieve their own economic and personal interests with little regard for the feelings and lives of the enslaved. The tragic implications of forced separations are perhaps best exemplified by the lamentations of an old freedwoman, who had twelve children in bondage-- "I don't know what has become of one of 'em," she stated. "It hurts me mightily to think of 'em."[17] What then, were freedpeople to do when little (or nothing) was known as to the exact whereabouts of their loved ones beyond the name of a prior owner and a "last seen" location?

For some freedmen, this meant a journey on foot. A correspondent for *the Nation,* while traveling through the South, encountered a freedman who had walked nearly six hundred miles over the course of two months. As the paper explained,

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[16] Marriage Records of the District of Columbia, 1866067, Asst. Commissioner, Freedmen's Bureau, Record Group 105, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
[17] Billingsley, *Black Families and the Struggle for Survival: Teaching Our Children to Walk Tall*, 51.

"The Negro had been sold and sent South four years before, and as soon as he learned he was free, [he was] determined to return to North Carolina and try to find his wife and children."[18]

Countless other freedmen turned to newspapers, printing advertisements in "Information Wanted" columns imploring others for any news they had regarding their loved ones. Freedpeople relied heavily on kinship networks and word of mouth to reunite them with their lost spouses, children, parents, and siblings. One advertisement published in 1866 detailed a husband's search for his wife, who had "left with many others when Sherman was marching through South Carolina in February 1865." The article concluded with a simple request, stating that "any information of her present residence would be thankfully received by her husband in San Francisco."[19] While in this case the couple had been apart for a single year, in others the time freedpeople spent separated was much longer. In 1882, a man by the name of W.M. Morris published a piece inquiring for any known information regarding his wife and three children. Their former master had moved to Texas in 1851, carrying Morris's family with him, and the freedman "had not heard from them since July of 1854."[20] The article marked 31 years of separation for the family. In 1884, another freedman sought information about his brother, Ed Taylor, who had left him "in Rome, Georgia in 1867"-- he had "not heard from him since," 14 years later.[21] Another article from 1888 told the story of a daughter Lillie Walker, who sought information regarding the whereabouts of her father, a man by the name of William Gray. She saw him last when he left Monroe "about fourteen years ago," after that he "went to Little Rock, Arkansas," which was, she wrote, "the last place I heard from him definitely." She pleaded, "If there is any trace of him, or anyone knows of his whereabouts, please address me."[22] Because freedpeople depended upon the ability of those often unknown to them to identify their lost loved ones, unique traits and identifiers were often a great help in reunification efforts-- one woman, writing out of Chicago in 1891 after not having seen her children for 30

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[18] ibid., 51.
[19] "Information Wanted," *The Elevator*, October 6, 1866, in *Last Seen: Finding Family After Slavery,* https://informationwanted.org/items/show/3678.
[20] "W.M. Morris Searching for his Family," *Southwestern Christian Advocate,* June 8, 1882, in *Last Seen: Finding Families After Slavery,* https://informationwanted.org/items/show/1644.
[21] G.W. Taylor Seeking Information About His Brother Ed Taylor," *Southwestern Christian Advocate,* April 7, 1881, in *Last Seen: Finding Families After Slavery,* https://informationwanted.org/items/show/1362.
[22] "Lillie Walker Seeking Her Father William Gray," *Southwestern Christian Advocate,* July 26, 1888, in *Last Seen: Finding Families After Slavery,* https://informationwanted.org/items/show/4271.

years following their sale to "some man in North Carolina and South Carolina," emphasized that "the children had straight black hair" and "the girl [had] a little piece chipped out of her right ear."[23] Turning to one another in kinship networks that stretched across the United States, freedpeople used newspapers as a platform through which to tap into the knowledge of their broader communities and to hopefully reunite with those they loved.

These tragic articles, in providing last-seen locations and information relevant to the search, additionally provided heartbreaking visions into both the overt cruelty and the distant inhumanity of the system of slavery wherein human beings were treated as little more than property to be sold, traded, and abused. A piece written by freedman William Duckweth further highlighted this idea, in which he explained that he was separated from his parents after his master, Robert Woods, "sold them to a neighbor, after which he took brothers George Logan, Rudus Pickney, Lecroy Burton Woods, and myself to Georgia." The brothers stayed together in Georgia under the control of Robert Woods for two years before, Duckweth wrote, "he traded me to his brother-in law, Martin Ward, for a waiting-girl named Mahala Ward," effectively tearing Duckweth away from his entire family."[24] Another article, in providing unique identifiers of the missing persons, additionally emphasized the barbarity of slavery. Hester Spranglin, writing in 1888, inquired in the paper for her mother and father Emily and Joseph Thompson, who she had not seen "since before the late war." Her mother, she described, could be quickly physically identified on account of the fact that "she had one eye put out by night patrol." Spranglin went on to write that she "was about seven years of age when [she] was taken from [her] people," as "Negro traders" took her one day "while playing with other children" and she "had not heard or seen of her family since."[25] These stories are tragic, stunning in numbers and in content, revealing the inhumane nature at the core of chattel slavery. However, while heartbreaking, their very existence is simultaneously evidence of the belief many freedpeople held in the power of kinship networks to reunite them with those they had lost.

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[23] "Mrs. E Wilson Searching for Her Children Buchanan and Martha Childs," *The Appeal,* January 4, 1891, in *Last Seen: Finding Families After Slavery,* https://informationwanted.org/items/show/2217.

[24] "Watson Duckweth Searching for His Parents Jennie and Edmond Woods, and His Siblings," *Southwestern Christian Advocate,* August 18, 1881, in *Last Seen: Finding Families After Slavery* https://informationwanted.org/items/show/4247.

[25] "Hester Spranglin Seeking Her Mother Emily Thompson and Her Father Joseph Thompson," *Southwestern Christian Advocate,* July 19, 1888, in *Last Seen: Finding Family After Slavery,* https://informationwanted.org/items/show/4266.

Black churches served as an important arm of these kinship networks, operating as the thread stringing together countless communities of freedpeople across long stretches of distance. There was perhaps no greater cultural cornerstone of the black community in Reconstruction than the church, for "only in the black church could the former slave find the opportunity for economic cooperation and education; only there could African Americans exercise political power, leadership skills, and self-determination."[26]

The African Methodist Episcopal Church was a crucial communal figurehead in the lives of many freedpeople, as it was "the first Protestant denomination to be established by African Americans," and its existence served as demonstrable proof of "black church members' desire for religious autonomy."[27] As a result, the church was a frequent avenue through which freedpeople attempted to reconnect with those they had lost. Many freedpeople, in their articles seeking reunion, emphasized that those they had loved and lost were faithful members of the church. Betsey Williamson of Louisiana sought her brother, Jeff Brower, whom she left in Mississippi. "I understand that he belongs to the A.M.E. church," she wrote. "If there is a brother of that name I would like to know."[28] Another story featured a woman by the name of Letitia E. Rodgers, who was searching for her lost brother, Arthur Zacharaih Tover. Her brother had "worked and bought himself," and was living in New Orleans—the "last [she] heard from him he [had] sent [her] a small tin box with $100 in it." Desperate, she pleaded: "I was taken away from my people. Brother was a member of the M.E. Church. Please address me at Lavernia, Texas."[29]

If membership of the church was not what freedpeople emphasized, then the church nonetheless was in many cases the conduit through which communication between those separated occurred. Several articles included requests to address the writer at a local chapter of the A.M.E. church. Mike Hardon wrote in 1883 that he desired "to inquire about [his] parents, to see if [he could] find out where they [were]." They went by the names Bill and Kittie Hardon, and had three children alongside Mike, "on Albert Dunbar's plantation." Anyone with information was

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[26] Cheatham and Stewart, *Black Families: Interdisciplinary Perspectives,* 36.
[27] "African Methodist Episcopal Church," in *Last Seen: Finding Families After Slavery,* https://informationwanted.org/items/browse?tags=African+Methodist+Episcopal+Church.
[28] "Betsey Williamson Wishes to Find Her Brother," *Southwestern Christian Advocate,* February 14, 1884, in *Last Seen: Finding Families After Slavery,* https://informationwanted.org/items/show/2872.
[29] Letita E. Rodgers Searching for Her Brother Arthur Zachariah Tolaver," *Southwestern Christian Advocate,* September 16, 1880, in *Last Seen: Finding Families After Slavery,* https://informationwanted.org/items/show/4493.

instructed to write to "Edward Dixon, Sixth Street A.M.E. church."[30] A different woman by the name of Sallie Claiborn inquired for news regarding her father, Reverend Nat Curry. Writing from Louisiana, she had last heard of her father in Paris, Tennessee. "I was a very small girl when I left him," she wrote, before requesting that any information be addressed to Reverend A.R. Norris, St. Paul M.E. Church, Columbus, Texas."[31] Black churches established themselves as an important avenue through which black kinship groups were formed, and thus freedpeople were quick to turn to them when seeking out those they had loved and lost. These articles are simultaneously tragic and telling; they are a testament to the fact that freedpeople held fast to the notion that their efforts would not be fruitless. They believed in the power of community and connection, relying heavily upon it to rebuild their families in the years following emancipation.

This faith in one another was not unfounded, for newspapers published numerous tales of joyous reunions between freedpeople who had been torn apart during enslavement alongside their "Information Wanted" advertisements. One piece told the story of "colored janitor" Nat Miller, who in 1904-- "after fifty years of separation"-- once again was reunited with "his sister whom he lost during slavery times." The siblings were 54 and 67 years of age, respectively.[32] Another told the story of Richard Zeigler, who had in 1883 "recently received tidings of his wife, from whom he [had] been separated for thirty-two years." He "had been looking for her ever since the war," during which "she was sold by slave traders and he gradually lost all trace of her whereabouts." He received a telegraph from her in Georgia, and "wept for joy" before starting immediately "for that State to bring her back"-- the article reported that the man was a mere "sixty years old" at the time of their reunion.[33] A third article from *The Courier Journal* based out of Kentucky told the story of the reunion of Ellen Johnson and her mother in 1885, fifty years after they had been separated during enslavement when Ellen's mother "was sold and taken away from her." The pair was happily reunited when "the old woman heard in some way that the daughter was living in Louisville and at once made up her mind to come

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[30] "Mike Hardon Searching for His Parents Bill and Kittie as well as His Brothers," *Southwestern Christian Advocate,* August 30, 1883, in *Last Seen: Finding Families After Slavery,* https://informationwanted.org/items/show/2282.

[31] "Sallie Claiborn Seeking Her Father Rev. Nat Curry," *Southwestern Christian Advocate,* August 9, 1888, in *Last Seen: Finding Family After Slavery,* https://informationwanted.org/items/show/4280.

[32] "Nat Miller Reunited with his Sister," *Lawrence Daily World,* March 28, 1904, in *Last Seen: Finding Family After Slavery,* https://informationwanted.org/.

[33] "Thirty-two Years in Search of a Wife," *The National Tribune*, February 22, 1883, in *Last Seen: Finding Families After Slavery,* https://informationwanted.org/items/show/2819.

and live with her." Once together again, the paper noted that "mother and daughter of course did not recognize each other, but were overjoyed, nonetheless… the mother is 112 years old and her daughter 60."[34]

On one hand, the stunning lengths of time the freedpeople in these articles spent apart served as evidence of the cruel legacies of the institution of slavery that had not allowed for the protection and preservation of the most intimate connections between the enslaved. On the other hand, these triumphant stories demonstrated the survival of families against insurmountable odds, demonstrating to freedpeople who posted "Information Wanted" advertisements across the nation that their work was not in vain. Freedpeople engaged in the work of reconstruction and relied upon the strength of kinship networks because they believed and witnessed the ability of kinship groups to aid in reunion. Torn between devotion and despair, freedpeople depended upon one another to rebuild communities torn apart by slavery. While we cannot undermine the tragedy of the legacies of slavery, we similarly cannot ignore the work freedpeople undertook-- often to great success-- to reunite with those they loved.

As these families formed, they came with considerable baggage concerning issues of gender and patriarchy. As emancipation took root, black families solidified in their patriarchal structures, owing partially to political changes along with the rapidly proliferating ideologies of black churches. Marriage allowed men to don their formal attire and enter patriarchal roles that directly opposed "nineteenth century racist stereotypes of freedmen being beastlike in manners, intelligence, appearance, and appetite."[35] For women, marriage was "the opportunity of a lifetime to show off their physical beauty and proclaim their moral purity," two characteristics that "stood in stark contrast" to racist and popular white conceptions of "enslaved black womanhood as morally debased and physically unappealing."[36] This shift to encouraging "manhood" in the patriarchal sense within the population of freedmen sometimes had devastating consequences for freedwomen, who found themselves at the will and whims of their husbands.

For many enslaved men, the system of chattel slavery was inherently emasculating, as it deprived them of their perceived right to lead and control a family; relative equality between the sexes was established during slavery as both

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[34] "A Noble Gathering: Five Generations Meet in this City-- A Family's Strange History," *The Courier-Journal*, September 12, 1885, in *Last Seen: Finding Family After Slavery,* https://informationwanted.org/.
[35] Stevenson, "Us never had no big funerals or weddin's on de place: Ritualizing Black Marriage in the Wake of Freedom", 49.
[36] ibid., 51.

men and women alike were subjugated and treated as property by their white owners. Some of the "favorite" slaves of former white slavemasters had been taught during their time in bondage to read and write, and it was not uncommon for former owners to reach out to those ex-slaves, imploring them to return. One such letter reached freedman Henry Bibb in 1844, after he had escaped into Canada via the underground railroad, and Bibb's rebuttal of his former owner's beckonings provide great insight into the effects the lack of autonomy and patriarchal control had on the psyche of black men in bondage. Bibb conceded that he thought, "it is very probable that I should have been a toiling slave on your property today if you had treated me differently." The cardinal offense of Bibb's former master, Bibb went on to explain, was his treatment of Bibb's wife. "To be compelled to stand by and see you whop and slash my wife without mercy," he wrote, "when I could offer her no protection, not even by offering myself to suffer the lash in her place, was more than I felt it to be the duty of the slave husband to endure."[37]

As early as 1855, black men had endorsed a change in gender distinctions that would afford them a more patriarchal role within the familial structure. The National Negro Convention of 1855 articulated these feelings of anger as black men condemned the denial of their ownership of not only their own bodies but also their "wives, home, children, and the products of our own labor." The convention leaders resolved to "vindicate our manhood, command our respect, and claim the attention and admiration of the civilized world."[38]

The most significant impact of emancipation on the family was the autonomy it afforded black men to establish these long-desired patriarchal norms and structures within their unions and families. Political transformations of the Reconstruction era partially aided this development: following the passage of the 14th Amendment in 1867, black men could "hold office, serve on juries, vote, and take leadership positions in the Republican party; black women could do none of these new things."[39] As a result, while emancipation led to great strides in the freedom of black men to live as white men did, there was no guarantee of gender equality, and black women were left for the moment waiting in the darkness for their day in the sun.

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[37] Henry Bibb, Letter to William Gatewood (March 23,1844) in Henry Bibb, *Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb, An American Slave, Written by Himself (New* York: Published by the Author, 1850), passim.
[38] Kenneth M. Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South* (New York: Knopf, 1956), 340.
[39] Franklin, *Ensuring Inequality: The Structural Transformation of the African American Family*, 24.

Just as black churches served as important avenues of reunion, they additionally played a key role in establishing patriarchy as the "just" and "moral" arrangement of the black family unit. Sociologist E. Franklin Frazier claimed that the black church "sought to affirm the man's interest and authority in the family."[40] As the number of black churches increased, membership began to require a "certain adherence to rules of sexual abstinence outside of marriage and monogamy during marriage." Freedpeople who sought refuge and inclusion within the church community were expected to "try and remain with the spouses and children that they had at the time of their freedom; to abandon multiple liaisons; to seek written documentation, in the form of marriage licenses and certificates of their marital state; and to live peaceably as husband and wife under one roof."[41]

Black churches were not always kind to freedwomen who violated these moral expectations and subverted patriarchal power. Author and traveler Francis Butler Leigh wrote of her interaction with a black woman on a visit to the Sea Islands of Georgia-- the woman had been expelled from her church and sat "on the church steps, rocking herself backwards and forwards in great distress." When Leigh asked what offense the woman had committed to deserve her dismissal, the woman revealed that she "had refused to obey her husband in a small matter." The church claimed that the only way for her to gain readmission was if she were to "make a public apology before the whole congregation."[42]

While humiliation was one method through which black women were forced to adjust to a patriarchal familial structure, it was not the only one-- black women were, as they were expected to be utterly subservient to their husbands, denied autonomy at best and outright abused at worst. The Freedmen's Bureau "vindicated," to use the language of the 1855 National Negro Convention, "the black man by designating him as head of the black household and establishing his right to sign contracts for the labor of his entire family." Additionally, "wage scales were set" that ensured black women receive less compensation than black men "for identical labor."[43] Wives were seen as property of their husbands to be controlled and kept "in line"-- this is best emphasized through an interaction between one freedman and a Bureau official, where the official reportedly made the husband swear "to work faithfully and keep his wife in subjection" after she had "damned the Bureau" and

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[40] ibid., 24.
[41] Stevenson, "Us never had no big funerals or weddin's on de place: Ritualizing Black Marriage in the Wake of Freedom", 47.
[42] Frances Butler Leigh, *Ten Years on a Georgia Plantation Since the War* (1888), 246-48.
[43] Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present*, 62.

insisted that "all the Bureaus out can't make her work."[44] The dark underbelly of this patriarchal system along with black women's discontent with the status quo is well documented within the records of the Freedmen's Bureau, which received "hundreds of complaints by black women of battery, adultery, and nonpayment of child support… [with] some women going so far as to object to their husband's signing labor contracts for them."[45]

Moreover, if we are to examine family in the context of the legacies of slavery, we must address the existence of children born from black women's often nonconsensual relationships with their former white masters. In the wake of emancipation, black woman issued similar complaints of failure to pay child support and general physical and sexual abuse against these white men with whom they had been forced to bear children. One pregnant woman recorded only as "Priscilla" went before the Augusta, Georgia Freedman's Bureau in 1865 and issued complaints regarding the former slave trader O.H. Marshall. Marshall, who had brought her from North Carolina to Georgia during the war, was the father of her child, she claimed, and he had "turned her out of doors." In a win for Priscilla, a Bureau officer convinced Marshall to support her.[46] Other women, however, were not so lucky. In the same year, also at the Georgia Bureau location, a woman by the name of Emma Hurlburt issued complaints against James Selkirk, the previous Waynesboro Railroad superintendent, who she claimed was her child's father. She wanted to receive financial support for their child-- however, no such support was secured by the Bureau on her behalf.[47]

Other women complained of physical and sexual abuse endured by both them and their children, committed by their white male former masters in the years following emancipation. Tabby Wheatly issued a grievance against Andrew B. Payne and Miles Ferguson, who she claimed had "took [her] daughter and beat her badly." When the young girl ran to her mother's cabin, the men followed her and attempted to beat her once again. Wheatly said that she "would not let them," at which point

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[44] Case 29 (May 30, 1868, pp. 104-5), Register of Complaints, Cuthbert, Georgia, Agent (No. 238, In. #859), BRFAL.
[45] Franklin, *Ensuring Inequality: The Structural Transformation of the African American Family*, 23.
[46] Trial Docket, 1865, Augusta, Ga., Freedmen's Bureau, vol. 158, 2-5, in Herbert G. Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom: 1750-1925.* North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1977.
[47] Docket of Cases Tried (1866), Augusta Ga., Freedmen's Bureau, 16 Oct. 1866, vol. 157, 20-21, in Herbert G. Gutmans, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom: 1750-1925.* North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1977.

she said “Payne then jumped on me and Ferguson struck me down a dozen times with a stick.

Payne took the girl down to the back of the yard and pulled her clothes over her head and beat her holding her head between his knees. [Wheatly] heard the cries of the girl and ran down. He then let go of the girl, and began to beat me again.[48]

This was, unfortunately, hardly the only grievance issued against Payne. He “made similar advances” to Maria Posey, a freedwoman who made a home for herself with her five-year-old daughter. When Payne entered her residence, she claimed she was in bed:

> I got off the bed and was putting on my shoes when he pushed me back and tried to pull up my clothes. I screamed. He let me alone. I jumped and ran toward the door-- I then saw a companion of his outside. Payne took up a fire shovel and was going to strike me with it when the man jumped in and took the shovel from him. He then shoved me back on the fire and burned up my dress.

When asked to present evidence of the harrowing incident, Maria Posey “showed the charred dress to the Murfreesboro Bureau officer.”[49] Black women’s lack of authority within their households and over their labor as well as the financial, physical, and sexual abuse they endured at the hands of black and white men alike, serve as evidence of how, though black families survived, they were not progressive nor equal in every respect. Freedom was no guarantee of equality, and the complaints of black women found within the records of the Freedmen’s Bureau serve as testimony to how they were forced to navigate a world less acquiescent to their needs, wants, and desires, one in which they remained relegated to second-class citizenship.

Examining these pieces of testimony, these single stories of longing, searching, reunion, and mistreatment has powerful implications regarding the larger story of emancipation and the work, realities, and shortcomings of Reconstruction. Using these individual stories, an intimate, personal, and realistic picture of the story of the experiences of a broader community can take form. Enslavement indisputably

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[48] Complaint Register, March 1868, pp. 44-59, South Carolina Freedmen’s Bureau Mss. in Herbert G. Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom: 1750-1925.* North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1977.

[49] Murfreesboro, Tenn., complaints enclosed in John Seage, January 1866, to J.D. Alden,T/42-39-3, Tennessee Freedmen’s Bureau Mss., Record Group 105, National Archives in Gutman, Herbert G. *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom: 1750-1925.* North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1977.

had far-reaching effects on the lives of freedpeople in emancipation. While many families that formed during slavery enjoyed during Reconstruction, the joy of legal recognition for their longstanding unions, countless others desperately turned to newspapers and churches as avenues through which they attempted to reconnect with those they had been torn from while trapped in a system of human bondage. The existence of countless “Information Wanted" advertisements detailing the individual stories of black Americans as they sought those they lost demonstrated freedpeople’s faith in the power of community and kinship. Faith was not without merit, for newspapers similarly documented reunion stories and the success of relying upon such networks.

When we examine the form and function of these families, it is clear that patriarchal norms emerged between unions of freedmen and women, a trend that was encouraged through the creed of black churches, political developments, and the practices of the Freedmen’s Bureau. While black men made great strides in gaining autonomy and freedom, emancipation was not yet enough for black women to enjoy the same freedom and self-determination as patriarchy took form. Lacking control over their labor, denied an equal wage, relegated to second class within and outside of the household, often denied child support, and in some cases, physically and sexually abused by both their black partners and white former masters in the years following emancipation, black women faced a unique and unjust oppression by virtue of the intersection of their race and sex.

While this inequality cannot be ignored, the very existence of complaints of abuse and mistreatment issued by black women during Reconstruction was additionally indicative of a new level of social and political clout they came to possess in the years following emancipation. While black women were certainly held to different standards and experienced different oppressions than their black male counterparts, it is also true that their ability to stake claims, to issue complaints, and form arguments on their behalf within the context of a robust social institution such as the Freedmen’s Bureau indicated that, while equality still lay far on the horizon, emancipation granted black women a social stage on a level hitherto unknown for them to speak. Moreover, the sheer number of these claims illustrates that while certainly *victimized*, it would be boldly untrue to claim that black women were helpless and silent *victims.*

As put by sociologist and former president of Morgan State University, Andrew Billingsley, “the very fact of the survival of Black families, despite a severely cruel system of slavery and oppression, is in itself prima facie evidence of the strength resident in Black families.” He charged, as I do within this piece, that black families “did not become dehumanized by that system”-- “it tried to dehumanize us, it tried to crush our humanity, but in the process it exhibited the

inhumanity of others and affirmed our humanity because that resilience, that ability to see the reality for what it really is, that capability of bouncing back to live another day is part of our experience."[50] The freedpeople of the Reconstruction era were not passive, downtrodden actors, and we do them a great disservice if we regard them as such—they worked actively and tirelessly to rebuild those communities and families, to great success.

The story of American Reconstruction is a complex one, rife with incongruity. Revisionist historians worked to demonstrate how the period saw black Americans make great strides in the realm of equality, crafting a narrative that emphasized these advancements rather than the holdovers from the institution of slavery and the power and prevalence of white supremacy still felt by black Americans. From this school emerged the post-revisionist frame of reference that which turned a more jaundiced eye to the progress made during emancipation, emphasizing instead those legacies of the system of chattel slavery and their impacts on the lives of the freedpeople. The experience of the freedpeople lies somewhere along these two extremes, resting in the gray area between success and failure. After an examination of the personal stories of both couples and individuals and what they faced in reuniting, the role prescribed to black women in the "free" family, and the way the community reinforced the patriarchal model passed down from the master class and the white community at large, it is clear that the road to equality was both rockier than the Revisionists would claim and more successful than the post-Revisionists would postulate. Black Americans were left struggling with one another as their only means of reunion—but this was not ultimately a death blow to their communities, as they both relied upon and strengthened kinship networks to reunite families across distance and time. We must acknowledge the beauty and joy to be found in knowing that even if people did not find one another, they had both the faith and the means to search. On the other hand, we must also understand that those families that did form looked markedly different than partnerships during enslavement as black families and communities replicated the patriarchal structures so long upheld by their white former masters, a development that meant that black women's experience with freedom was, by virtue of the intersection of their race and gender, decidedly more negative than black men's.

However, the ability to form familial units was ultimately the utmost expression of autonomy for the freedpeople, even if those units came with considerable baggage regarding the legacies of slavery and the solidification of the patriarchy. Freedom implied the existence of a legitimate social identity best demonstrated through marriages between freedmen and women. While the freedom

[50] Billingsley, *Black Families and the Struggle for Survival: Teaching Our Children to Walk Tall*, 8, 12.

to construct families was demonstrably no guarantee of full equality of the sexes, it was nonetheless a clear indication of autonomous existence under the law for the freedpeople of the Reconstruction era as well as undeniable evidence of the profound changes to the most intimate of relationships experienced by those freedpeople who fought to see the sun rise on the dawn of emancipation.

The "Jewish Question" in the Soviet Union and Representations of Israel from 1956-1964

By Mark Anbinder

The era between 1953 and 1964, known as "The Thaw," functions as a monumental shift in the history of the Soviet Union. Once gripped by a fierce and paranoid dictator, Joseph Stalin, his death in 1953 led to the release of millions from labor camps and a new openness in the country. Under his successor, Nikita Khrushchev, art and literature were allowed to flourish in new ways. As de-Stalinization continued under the new leader, foreign relations, too, opened to a new level that Soviet citizens could only have dreamed of under Stalin.

In keeping with all these changes, Khrushchev sought to revise the image of the Soviet Union both domestically and internationally. One thing seemed to remain constant, however: the need to address "the Jewish question" – though now, in a way that factored in the state of Israel, which had been declared in 1948 and recognized by Stalin in the same year.[1] Like Imperial Russia, the Soviet Union had a contentious history with its Jewish population, and anti-Semitism was just as prevalent. Despite official disapproval of any kind of ethnic discrimination, intrinsic to the Marxist ideology employed after the Bolshevik assumption of power in 1917, anti-Semitism among the population certainly did not disappear, and, furthermore, it resurfaced under Stalin's rule. For example, the Great Purge of 1936-37, which affected all Soviet citizens, notably affected Jews in particular ways. Many Jewish leaders, including Leon Trotsky, were executed, assassinated, or banished. In addition, the state decreed the closure of Jewish establishments such as schools, synagogues, and Zionist societies. Thus, while the persecution of the Stalin years was the result of a crackdown on all purported "enemies of the state," not necessarily singling out Jewish practices, it left the Jewish community of the Soviet Union weakened and diminished, thus beginning a new period of stagnation for, and aggression toward, Soviet Jews.

After the Second World War, Jewish veterans and survivors of the Holocaust in Nazi-occupied areas, saw more problems. Many found their homes taken up by Gentile neighbors who refused to give them back. In Ukraine, anti-Jewish riots took place with little to no interference from authorities. In 1948, the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, which was established by Soviet Jews under the initiative of the Soviet government to sway public opinion against Nazism and

[1] Phillip Marshall Brown, "The Recognition of Israel," *The American Journal of International Law* 42, no. 3 (July 1948): 620-627, https://doi.org/10.2307/2193961 [Last accessed 9 February 2023].

Fascism, was dissolved. Along with all other Jewish cultural institutions, its closure erased the last established Jewish political group from the Soviet Union.[2] Stalin also engaged in a blatantly anti-Semitic campaign. Jews were denied many positions in the workforce, high military posts, and roles in government. Such changes in policy after World War II raised suspicions of Jews, leading to a systemic eradication of their culture, usually disguised as assimilation into Soviet culture.[3]

Despite the clear mistreatment of Jews in the Soviet Union, many leaders, including Khrushchev, ignored or utterly denied any issues with the Jewish population.[4] This is discussed in works such as Lionel Kochan's *The Jews in Soviet Russia Since 1917* and Yaacov Ro'i's *Jews and Jewish Life in Russia and the Soviet Union*, which show examples of the oppressive nature of Soviet policy. "The Jewish Problem in the Soviet Union," by Arieh Tartakower, examines discriminatory policies and chronicles events in Soviet history that had a direct negative impact on Soviet Jews. These included the state closure of Jewish synagogues and schools, and the banning of Hebrew and Yiddish literature.[5]

William Korey's article "The Origins and Development of Soviet Anti-Semitism: An Analysis" highlights a lack of Jewish representation in politics and the workforce, and how this contributed to anti-Jewish sentiment in the Soviet Union. [6] Shimon Redlich's article "Khrushchev and the Jews" argues that the Soviet leader's denial of a "Jewish problem" in the Soviet Union contributed to policies and suspicions that hurt Jewish people during his era, while subverting attention from these policies.[7] A variety of work exists on Soviet relations with Israel as well. Some historians argue that Soviet foreign relations with the Middle East could have

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[2] Arieh Tartakower, "The Jewish Problem in the Soviet Union," *Jewish Social Studies* 33, no 4 (Oct 1971): 290, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4466668 [Last accessed 27 March 2022]

[3] Lionel Kochan, *The Jews in Soviet Russia Since 1917* (London, Oxford University Press, 1972), 49.

[4] Kochan, *The Jews in Soviet Russia,* 311 discusses Khrushchev's 1956 destalinization speech.

[5] Kochan, *The Jews in Soviet Russia* and Yaacov Ro'i, *Jews and Jewish Life in Russia and the Soviet Union* (Ilford, England, Frank Cass and Co, 1995).

[6] William Korey, "The Origins and Development of Soviet Anti-Semitism: An Analysis," *Slavic Review* 31, no. 1 (1972): 111-135, https://doi.org/10.2307/2494148 [Last accessed 27 March 2022]

[7] Shimon Redlich, "Khrushchev and the Jews," *Jewish Social Studies* 34, no. 4 (1972): 343-353 http://www.jstor.org/stable/4466737 [Last accessed 27 March 2022].

resulted from anti-Semitism. Others assert that Soviet support for anti-Israel Arab nations also stemmed from the view that Israel was a bourgeois-Capitalist society.[8]

This paper will not only discuss the so-called "Jewish problem" in the Soviet Union, but will also examine how, despite a policy aimed at integration and friendship among peoples, the Soviet state, together with the populace, continued to display anti-Semitic tendencies in various spheres of society even during the Thaw. Through both acceptance and denial of the mistreatment of Jews, and policy that unequally outlawed Jewish practices, while simultaneously allowing other minorities to flourish, the Soviet Union was clearly discriminatory. This anti-Semitism was also a factor in Soviet perceptions of Israel and played a role in justifying Soviet support for countries that conflicted with Israel.

As already demonstrated, the Jewish population of the Soviet Union had been accustomed to anti-Semitic treatment, and despite the general liberalization of the Khrushchev period, discriminatory policies did not halt. During the Thaw, the state continued to target Jewish institutions and organizations, shutting down synagogues and Zionist groups. Between 1956 and 1962, the state ordered roughly 350 synagogues to be shut down. In 1956, the Soviet Union only had about 450 synagogues, and by the end of 1962, the number was as low as 96. The government also banned Jewish customs, language, and published works, effectively instituting assimilation.[9]

Where faith was concerned, state measures like the closure of synagogues was part of a general anti-religious campaign that, under Khrushchev, was directed also at Orthodox Christianity.[10] However, the government supported the cultural development of other ethnic groups and had even granted the largest ones a degree of power since the inception of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in 1922. For instance, the state had granted the Turkmen, Tajik, Kyrgyz, and Uzbek peoples their own territory within the Soviet Union, and their own republican governments – a process that was facilitated by the geographic concentration of these ethnic groups. The Jews, on the other hand, were a diaspora. Although many lived in giant urban centers such as Moscow, their population was otherwise scattered, which

[8] Jon D. Glassman, *Arms for the Arabs: The Soviet Union and War in the Middle East* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975).
[9] Tartakower, "The Jewish Problem," 298.
[10] Freedom of faith was not a feature of the more liberal atmosphere of the Thaw, given the focus of the period on returning to the principles of Marxism-Leninism, and emphasis on science and technology.

made establishing a Jewish republic within the Soviet Union a great a challenge, as highlighted by the failure of Birobidzhan.[11]

At the same time, the Soviet government also tried to curtail Jewish practices and customs to assimilate the Jews into mainstream Soviet culture. Jewish practices, most notably the baking of unleavened bread during Passover, were banned and became prosecutable offenses. Attending synagogues also became highly regulated due to unfounded fears of Jewish and Zionist conspiracies. In 1961, a Leningrad dentist, Gedaliah Perchesky, was accused of espionage for allowing members of the Israeli Embassy to visit his local synagogue.[12] The Soviet government also did not allow Jewish clergy to travel abroad or attend any international conventions.[13] Thus, while the persecution of Jewish *religious* practices might conform with the overall anti-religious stance of the Khrushchev regime, banning Jewish *cultural* practices, and disallowing Jewish leaders from operating internationally (particularly given that Muslim and Christian leaders *were* permitted to do so) was a departure from general policy that further indicates anti-Semitism at the state level.

Jewish culture was also under assault as the state scrutinized Jewish texts, particularly those written in Yiddish and Hebrew. During the 1959 census, only about 20 percent of the Jewish population of the Soviet Union claimed Yiddish as their mother tongue.[14] This was due to a variety of factors, primarily the eradication of Yiddish-speaking Jews in the Holocaust and policies under Stalin and Khrushchev alike that discouraged the use of Yiddish. The state, which controlled publishing, allowed only six Yiddish books to be published between 1948 and 1962. In fact, not a single book was published in 1958 for any of the three million Jews living in the Soviet Union at the time. 472,000 of these Jews had listed Yiddish as their mother tongue in the census the following year. This is not solely an issue of assimilation either, as many books were published for the Mari, Ostyak, and Yakuts peoples in their native languages, despite these groups being smaller, more isolated, and in more remote parts of the country than Soviet Jews.[15]

What was published, however, in relation to Jewish culture, in 1963, was an informational pamphlet called “Iudaism Bez Prikras” (“Judaism Without

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[11] Kochan, *The Jews in Soviet Russia,* 46. See also the chapter starting on p. 62 for context on Birobidzhan, a state created for the Jewish population of the Soviet Union.
[12] Salo Wittmayer Baron, *The Russian Jew Under Tsars and Soviets* (New York: McMillian, 1976), 291.
[13] Lester Samuel Eckman, *Soviet Policy Towards Jews and Israel, 1917-1974* (New York: Shengold Publishers, 1974), 58.
[14] Ro’i, *Jews and Jewish Life*, 228.
[15] Tartakower, “The Jewish Problem,” 297-298.

Embellishment"), by Trofim Kichko, a known Nazi collaborator during the Second World War. The pamphlet was advertised as an analysis of the Jewish religion but displayed blatantly anti-Semitic evaluations of Jewish culture and people. It was published by the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences and aimed at a Ukrainian audience. Reminiscent of Nazi propaganda, the pamphlet enraged domestic and international Jewish community members. It also incorrectly claimed that Zionist leaders in Israel were aiding fascists and egregiously claimed that Jewish capital had allowed Hitler to obtain power before World War II. The pamphlet was popular in Ukraine and was praised as an exposé on Jewish culture.[16] The director of Jewish Minorities Research for *New Politics* and activist, Moshe Decter, concluded that it "has become permissible – nay, fashionable – to be both anti-Nazi and anti-Semitic."[17]

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) was never averse to sharing its opinions on Jews, whether they were rooted in fact or not. In 1956, Khrushchev told a French socialist delegation that if Jews continued to hold high positions in Ukraine it would "create jealousy and hostility toward Jews." In December 1962, he told a Party-organized meeting of artists and intellectuals that if Jews were to occupy top posts, it would create anti-Semitism.[18] It seems this idea was the key justification for a lack of Jews in government.

Khrushchev's personal attitudes toward Jews were shaped largely by his traditional upbringing in Ukraine, which has a complicated history of anti-Semitism, and they were manifested in anti-Semitic actions while in positions of power in Ukraine.[19] For example, when he was chairman of the Ukrainian Council of People's Commissars from 1944-46, Khrushchev secretly divested Jews of official positions so that Ukraine was not "run by Jews."[20] Later, while in national power in 1956, he made a statement as the General Secretary of the CPSU that the various Soviet republics might want to reduce the number of Jews in their administrations.[21]

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[16] Victoria Khiterer, "Not So Silent: Jewish Religious and Cultural Life in Kiev, 1945–1970s." *Authority and Dissent in Jewish Life* (West Lafayette: Purdue Unversity Press, 2020) 138, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv15wxrj7.14 [Last accessed March 9, 2023].
[17] Moshe Decter, "'Judaism without Embellishment': Recent Documentation of Russian Anti-Semitism," *New Politics: A Quarterly Journal of Socialist Thought* [vol. and no. unknown], 1964, 112, http://www.ajcarchives.org/AJC_DATA/Files/668.PDF [Last accessed April 19, 2022].

[18] Korey, "Soviet Anti-Semitism," 122-123.
[19] Redlich, "Khrushchev and the Jews," 347 and Decter, "Judaism Without Embellishment," 103.
[20] Eckman, *Soviet Policy,* 54.
[21] Tartakower, "The Jewish Problem," 294.

Khrushchev also made an inflammatory statement to a Polish delegation about the Jewish presence in its government and questioned its legitimacy.[22] In 1957, Lazar Kaganovich was removed from the Presidium of the CPSU, making him the last prominent Jewish politician in office until Venyamin Dymshitz was appointed chairman of the Soviet State Planning Committee in 1962. As a result of such sentiments and policies, there were few Jewish representatives in the Soviet government. In 1959, there were only 14 Jewish deputies elected to governing bodies out of over 5000 deputies. There was only one out of the 800 in Russia, one among the 450 in Ukraine, and two out of the 400 in Belarus. The other republics had a similar disproportion of Jews in government compared to their populations.[23]

Similar figures could be seen in education. The presence of Jews in higher education began to decrease in the years after 1956. Between the 1956-57 and 1960-61 school years, the number of Jewish students dropped by about 7400 individuals. This was due to Khrushchev's policies of granting preference in higher education to those with work experience, as well as to discriminatory policies and a culture that affected Jewish admissions.[24] Between 1956 and 1959, Jews made up only 3.2 percent of those in higher education programs, though their numbers in this area were on the increase by 1959.[25]

Jewish representation in the Soviet Union also garnered international attention. American attorney and Jewish communal leader Lewis H. Weinstein convinced Robert Kennedy to press Khrushchev on the "Jewish issue" in the USSR during a conference to discuss a nuclear test ban. In response, Khrushchev dismissed Kennedy, telling him this was "an internal matter and none of America's business." Khrushchev made it clear that the topic of policies and emigration concerning Jews was not to be discussed outside of the Soviet Union.[26]

Jewish emigration was a heated topic under Khrushchev because many Jews were eager to settle in the newly established state of Israel after the Second World

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[22] Baron, *The Russian Jew,* 284. In reference to Poland, Khrushchev stated: "There are among you, many leaders named 'ski', but an Abramovich always remains Abramovich." "-ski" is a popular ending in Polish-Jewish surnames.

[23] Korey, "Soviet Anti-Semitism," 119.
[24] Mordechai Altshuler, *Soviet Jewry Since the Second World War: Population and Social Structure* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987) 118.
[25] Altshuler, *Soviet Jewry,* respectively, 148 and 108.
[26] Lewis H. Weinstein, "Soviet Jewry and the American Jewish Community 1963-1987," *American Jewish History* 77, no. 4 (1988): http://www.jstor.org/stable/23883209 [Last accessed 26 April 2022].

War. For many Jews, emigrating was a way to reconnect with family members who had escaped the Nazi onslaught during the war, and with whom they may have lost contact. Despite this fact, the Soviet government did not grant many exit permits to Jews seeking a new home in Israel. Khrushchev rejected over 9000 exit permits in 1959, however, he publicly denied having done so. Additionally, in 1959, hundreds of thousands of Jewish citizens decided to list themselves as Russian, Ukrainian or some other ethnicity in the census, most likely to avoid divulging information that may lead to trouble in the future or compromise a position they held. [27]

Regarding Israel, Soviet policy was intertwined with anti-Jewish, anti-Zionist, and anti-Israeli actions that were interconnected in the grand scheme of the Jewish question of the Soviet Union. While hostile policy toward Israel was certainly a result of its status as a capitalist nation, it was also undoubtedly connected to anti-Semitism in Soviet politics and society. The so-called "Doctors' Plot" was perhaps the most famous example of anti-Jewish sentiments affecting Jews and Zionists within the USSR. In January 1953, the Stalin regime accused nine physicians of using medical malpractice to murder leaders in the Communist Party, including causing the deaths of Committee Secretaries Aleksandr Scherbakov and Andrei Zhdanov.[28] Six of the initial nine doctors were Jewish and were charged with espionage, conspiring with American and British agents, but also as Zionist spies, with little evidence. The Jewish doctors were said to have been in league with the American "Jewish bourgeois nationalist organization" called "Joint" (the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee), which was supposedly affiliated with American Intelligence and backed by Zionist agents.[29]

As a result, the Soviet media pushed a campaign of vigilance to the populace. Fearmongering among Western spies, including those from Israel, proliferated. The Soviet journal *Meditsinskiy Rabotnik* drove to "eliminate resolutely our people's gullibility, which constitutes fertile soil for spies and saboteurs."[30] On top of the negative perception of the purported Zionist conspirators, a terrorist attack in February on the Soviet Embassy in Tel Aviv resulted in a cut in diplomatic ties with Israel.[31] Soviet media reports accused the Israeli government of being involved

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[27] Kochan, *The Jews in Soviet Russia,* 118.
[28] Ro'i, *Jews and Jewish Life,* 104.
[29] "Bring Murderer-Doctors and Spies to Strict Account," *Meditsinsky Rabotnik,* January 13, 1953, 1. All of the Soviet newspaper and journal articles used for this research project were gleaned from the *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*.
[30] "Increase Vigilance!" *Meditsinsky Rabotnik,* January 27, 1953, 1.
[31] "Soviet Government Note on the Termination of Diplomatic Relations with Government of Israel in Connection with Bomb Explosion on Premises of Soviet Legation in Israel," *Pravda* and *Izvestia,* February 12, 1953, 2.

with the attack, and constantly linked it to groups like Joint to blame Western powers for it.[32]

After Stalin's death in March, tensions subsided. Under the interim Soviet leader Georgy Malenkov, diplomatic relations with Israel resumed in July 1953 and more embassies opened in Tel Aviv.[33] Additionally, more information on the "Doctors' Plot" revealed the allegations as fraudulent, and the remaining accused doctors were freed and exonerated. However, no mention of, or apology to, Zionist and Israeli parties had been made, and the negative impact of the plot on perceptions of Israel and Zionism remained. [34] Foreign policy toward Israel took a harsher turn when Khrushchev took over in 1954. When conflict arose in the Middle East, Soviet policies became more aggressive, anti-Israeli, and pro-Arab. In 1956, English and French forces aided Israel in pushing back the Egyptian line past the Sinai Peninsula. The Israeli occupation of Sinai became known as the 1956 Suez Crisis or Operation Kadesh. The Suez Crisis was immediately criticized by the Soviet regime, as exemplified by the communication between Nikolai Bulganin, then Premier of the USSR, and Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion of Israel.[35]

Accusing Israel of "acting as an instrument for foreign imperialist forces" and "toying in a criminal and irresponsible fashion with the fate of peace and its own people," Bulganin and the Soviet government made clear their condemnation of Israeli actions.[36] Bulganin sent similar letters to the prime ministers of France and Britain condemning them and criticizing their imperialistic actions.[37] Interestingly, his letter to the United States had a different message. Bulganin implored the US to join the efforts of the Soviet Union to quell aggression in the Middle East, stating, "The Soviet government addresses to the government of the United States of America a proposal for close cooperation in halting aggression and ending further

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[32] Y. Zhukov, "Terroristic Attack in Tel-Aviv and Fraudulent Game of Rulers of Israel," *Pravda,* February 14, 1953, 4.
[33] Kochan, *The Jews in Soviet Russia,* 118.
[34] "Communique of USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs," *Pravda* and *Izvestia*, April 3, 1953, 4.
See also "In Presidium of USSR Supreme Soviet," *Pravda* and *Izvestia,* April 4, 1953, 2.
[35] Avigdor Dagan, *Moscow and Jerusalem: Twenty Years of Relations Between Israel and the Soviet Union* (London: Abelard-Schuman, 1970), 107-108.
[36] "Message from Chairman of USSR Council of Ministers N. A. Bulganin to Prime Minister Ben-Gurion of Israel," *Pravda* and *Izvestia,* November 6, 1956, 2.
[37] "Message from Chairman of USSR Council of Ministers N. A. Bulganin to Prime Minister A. Eden of Great Britain," *Pravda* and *Izvestia,* November 6, 1956, 1-2, and "Message from Chairman of USSR Council of Ministers N. A. Bulganin to Chairman of Council of Ministers of France Guy Mollet," *Pravda* and *Izvestia,* November 6, 1956, 2.

bloodshed." Bulganin's main point was that the US and USSR could use their influence as world powers to stop fighting in the Middle East without hurting the interests of Great Britain and France.[38]

Soviet actions in the Middle East did not stop at foreign correspondence. During the Suez Crisis, to curtail Western influence over the area, the USSR sent two weapons shipments to the United Arab Republic (UAR) valued at about $336 million in total.[39] Even after the Suez Crisis, the USSR and UAR continued to have economic ties. For example, the Soviet Union continued sending industrial equipment and exporting goods such as cars, watches, and tractors to the UAR.[40]

While the Soviet government worked diplomatically, its media had an instrumental role in convincing the population to support the UAR and condemning Israel throughout the Khrushchev era. Reports of Israel assembling reservists for military preparations and gearing up for large scale attacks were common.[41] The media was also charged with influencing public opinion on the Suez Crisis, citing Western imperialism. The newspaper *Izvestia*, for example, claimed that the Suez Crisis was a way for colonizers, namely England and France, to retake land they once held in the area and gain more influence worldwide.[42] Another source, *Pravda*, also claimed that Israel's invasion, supported by Anglo-French forces, resulted from United Nations (UN) manipulation and could only be stopped by gathering the UN General Assembly and involving the USSR and the US.[43] Like the Suez Crisis, skirmishes in the Tawafik region of Syria caught similar media attention.[44]

Domestically, the Soviet media often publicized criticisms of Israel, avoiding, at all costs, any praise of the fledgling nation. One notable example is an article in the Soviet youth publication *Komsomolskaya Pravda* that described how a

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[38] "Message from Chairman of USSR Council of Ministers N. A. Bulganin to President of the United States of America D. Eisenhower," *Pravda and Izvestia,* November 6, 1956, 1.
[39] Glassman, *Arms for the Arabs,* 17-22.
[40] F. Nosov, "Strengthening of Economic Cooperation Between the USSR and UAR," *Pravda,* March 24, 1959, 6, and "Economic Expansion between UAR and Soviet Union Expands," *Pravda,* November 14, 1959, 3.

[41] "Suspicious Commotion in Israel," *Pravda,* October 28, 1956, 20.
[42] "The Colonizers Challenge the Peoples of the East," *Izvestia,* November 1, 1956, 3.

[43] "Hands Off Egypt!" *Pravda,* November 1, 1956, 1.
[44] S. Kondrashov, "Sparks of Military Conflicts," *Izvestia,* February 7, 1960, 5, and "Saber Rattling Will Lead to No Good," *Izvestia*, March 6, 1960, 5.

Soviet Jew left for Israel to reunite with his lost relatives and ended up in terrible conditions working for extremely low wages, constantly fearful of losing his job. He discussed how Israel was divided in two, between rich businessmen and an exploited working class. This article also accused Israel of slandering the Soviet Union and deliriously described poor living conditions in the country.[45] Similar claims of the Zionist "Jewish big bourgeoisie" who convince Jews from all over the world to come to Israel only to exploit them are exemplified in a letter from Soviet émigrés detailing extreme levels of poverty, overworked masses, a wealthy minority, and a hypocritical government that treats Soviet Jews differently because of their origin.[46]

These kinds of negative accounts were likely only published for propagandistic reasons, as damaging testimony from Jewish émigrés was aligned with both official Jewish emigration policy, and general anti-Semitism. The Soviet press never published positive information on Israel, as that would tarnish the official idea of a rigged bourgeois Zionist system that the USSR worked tirelessly to instill into the minds of the populace.

Overall, using the media for propaganda, the Soviet Union established negative notions of Israel, both internationally in the diplomatic sphere and at home. Anti-Semitism in Russia can be traced back centuries, beyond the Soviet era. It is intrinsically connected to policy through Russian culture and history, and is perfectly embodied in the "Protivism" observed through the laws, publications, and policies of the Khrushchev era.[47] When applied to Israel in particular, anti-Semitism, as manifested in negative sentiments, treatment, laws, and social practices within the Soviet Union, also affected perceptions of a Jewish homeland. That is not to say that foreign policy toward Israel was not impacted also by its status as a capitalist "Western" nation. However, this angle emerged within the context of popular anti-Semitism and state policies that together created a hostile environment for Soviet Jews. This is encapsulated in the following derogatory attitude conveyed in the words of Nikita Khrushchev to a delegation of Polish leaders: "You wish to help the Yids?"[48]

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[45] "In the Israeli Trap," *Komsomolskaya Pravda,* April 19, 1959, 4.

[46] "Deceived by Zionist Propaganda," *Trud,* May 26, 1959, 3.

[47] Kochan, *Jews in Soviet Russia,* 313-314. "Protivism" (from the Russian word *против* (protiv), meaning "against") was a Soviet practice used to denounce adversaries through militant, embattled language and name-calling, which encouraged anti-Semitic defamation, the use of Nazi tactics, and rude cartoons.

[48] Baron, *The Russian Jew,* 284.

"They Were the Messengers": Lesbian Librarians in the LGTBQ Rights Movement

By Shannon Thommes

"Not for children!" Librarian Kathleen T. Horning heard a woman in the audience shriek, before she flew from her seat to confront Cooperative Children Books Center (CCBC) director Ginny Moore Kruse. "Not for children!" Horning had been in attendance for a mid-1980s meeting with the CCBC to recommend the book *A Different Drummer* by Elaine Landau, one of the first explicitly positive LGTBQ nonfiction books ever published. Their recommendation followed a trend of positive and child-friendly books like *Annie On My Mind* by Nancy Garden. The CCBC, organized in 1961, served as a reference for schools and librarians. The organization researched books for institutions to add to their collection, including lesbian and gay publications; however, those works were challenged. As a lesbian woman herself, Horning recalled struggling to find LGTBQ literature in her youth that were not violent tragedies. Furthermore, in her career as a children's librarian, she noted that children were exposed to homophobic rhetoric from family and peers alike. She found herself lingering with the same thoughts again, for it to be acceptable there would be such a vocal and hateful denouncement of *A Different Drummer.*[1]

The efforts of the LGTBQ rights movement in the United States started to bear fruit by the 1980s.[2] LGTBQ people began to integrate themselves into mainstream society and start their families, and demanded more queer literature like *A Different Drummer*. These books were contested with questions of how "appropriate" they were for children, an attempt to push them back into shadowy closets by hiding representation. Kruse knew this, and firmly told the attendee "Yes, this is for children." The CCBC would continue to recommend books like *A Different Drummer,* and Horning went on to create LGTBQ reader's advisories with the American Library Association's (ALA) "Rainbow List." If books like *A Different*

[1] Horning did not give a specific date for this meeting. See Kathleen T. Horning, "Oral History Interview: Kathleen Horning (1110)," interview by Kelly Rupp, *UW-Madison Oral History Program* (2010), https://minds.wisconsin.edu/handle/1793/56848.

[2] Although it is commonly believed that the LGTBQ rights movement started with the 1969 riots at the Stonewall bar in New York, the LGTBQ movement emerged in the early 1950s with the establishment of the Mattachine Society and Daughters of Bilitis. These were LGTBQ advocacy groups for legal representation, see Lillian Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers: A History of Lesbian Life in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Penguin Books, 1991).; and Alex H. Poole "'Tearing the Shroud of Invisibility': Communities of Protest Information Practices and the Fight for LGBTQ Rights in US Librarianship," *Library Quarterly* 90, no. 4 (2020): 535-536, doi:10.1086/710255.

Drummer were the long-awaited love letters to the lesbian and gay community then librarians like Horning and Kruse were the messengers; they had the power to secure LTGBQ representation into mainstream, accessible spaces, and preserve the voices that would have been erased.[3]

Lesbian librarians contributed to the LGTBQ rights movement by contesting stereotypes of their community during the twenty year period between the 1970s and 1990s. They accomplished this by using their libraries, visible and accessible educational spaces, to provide access to queer resources under queer-friendly labels. These lesbian librarians led a textual revolution that centered the cultural acceptance of lesbian and gay people, yet their actions remain absent from activist narratives. This research highlights the remarkable successes of lesbian librarians. It addresses three areas of their activism; one, how the library science profession influenced them, two, the history of undeserving LGTBQ patrons for library neutrality ideals, and third, challenges these librarians faced as lesbian activists.

Lesbian librarians became involved in the LGTBQ rights movement because of the impact cold-war "loyalty programs" had on libraries. In the early 1950s, Americans became increasingly paranoid over the threat of communism during the Truman and Eisenhower presidencies. The government introduced loyalty programs to examine employees in the executive branch to dismiss them if these employees were deemed disloyal. Many members of congress saw queer people as "security risks", believing they were morally weak and therefore easy for the Soviet Union to recruit as secret agents. This fear was further reinforced when the American Psychiatric Association classified homosexuality as a curable mental illness. LGTBQ activist Barbara Gittings stated treatment included "incarceration in mental hospitals, lobotomies, and aversion therapy", which gave patients electric shocks while showing them images of same sex people. This led to massive purges of gay employees from the government, including the Library of Congress (LOC). It also intensified criminalization of sodomy with the nationwide legalization of workplace discrimination against queer or suspected queer employees in many state governments.[4] In other words, the LGTBQ community was an easy scapegoat to promote nationalistic and xenophobic ideas, and were heavily repressed for national security.

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[3] Horning, interview.

[4] Louise S. Robbins, "A Closet Curtained by Circumspection: Doing Research on the Mcarthy Era Purge of Gays from the Library of Congress," in *Daring to Find Our Names: The Search for Lesbigay Library History,* ed. James V. Carmichael (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1998), 55-57.; Tracy Baim, *Barbara Gittings: Gay Pioneer* (Chicago: Prairie Avenue Productions, 2015), 108.; and Poole, "Tearing the Shroud," 531.

The "war on sex criminals" affected the access and labeling of LGTBQ materials in libraries as well.[5] For context, the LOC provides the guidelines for categorizing materials in American libraries. As early as 1910 it had labeled LGTBQ books under the tag "sexual perversion", meaning they were shelved alongside monographs about pedophilia and other violent sex crimes. When criticized for this, the LOC's subject catalog committee argued that the cataloging system was based on terminology found within these books. At the time, most of the available LGTBQ books were medical books that argued homosexuality was a form of neurosis, so the LOC refused to change it. Though these labels had long existed in libraries, cold-war homophobia made these labels hyper-visible, and quickly became a tool to further discriminate against the LGTBQ community. This abusive language of the cataloging system, as well as the very real fear of public ostracization and legal punishment, led many LGTBQ librarians to accept these changes.[6]

However, many lesbian librarians recognized this widespread oppression as a call for action, challenging it in libraries. To connect with these strategies, this research uses articles from library journals, newsletter, and bibliographies from the 1970s to the 1990s. Many of these were published by large organizations like the ALA's Gay and Lesbian Task Force (GLTF), the Progressive Librarian Guild (PLG), and the Lesbian Herstory Archives (LHA), though others were found in non-affiliated LGTBQ librarian anthologies. These sources outline the different strategies lesbian librarians took to make their libraries more inclusive to the LGTBQ community; though sources are unclear if lesbian librarians advocated for transgender patrons and other queer identities. Using a spatial analysis, three different activist initiatives will be examined. Firstly, how publications by Barbara Gittings and the GLTF created resources like bibliographies and book awards that made LGTBQ materials widely visible. Secondly, how lesbian librarians challenged homophobic accessibility barriers in their library's catalogs. Thirdly, how the Lesbian Herstory Archive was used to connect and empower the lesbian community.

The existing historiography of lesbian librarian activism comes mainly from library journals and a few edited books made by other library professionals. These authors argue that the pressures of the cold-war to be heterosexist, bureaucratic and conformist led many libraries to take an apolitical stance on social issues. This made it very difficult for lesbian librarians in particular to become activists because they

[5] "The war on the sex criminals" is a term coined by Margot Canaday to describe the criminalization of homosexuality in post-WWII America. For full definition, see Melissa A. Adler's "'Let's Not Homosexualize the Library stacks': Liberating Gays in the Library Catalog," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 24, no. 3 (2015), 492.

[6] Adler, "'Let's Not Homosexualize,'" 489-490.; and Robbins, "A Closet," 60.

were more pressured to conform as women in a patriarchal society.[7] Non-librarian historians often doubt the significance of libraries as spaces for lesbian activism, arguing libraries perpetuated homophobia by utilizing homophobic cataloging and other physical barriers. Others forgo analyzing libraries as lesbian activist spaces altogether, focusing on activism in independent and urban queer bookstores.[8] In sum, American libraries have a distinct history of homophobia, making lesbian librarian activism a difficult area of academic study. However, this makes this topic critical because they were able to transform the American library into an inclusive space.

Despite the limited historiography, evidence reveals lesbian librarians were powerful figures in the LGTBQ rights movement. Lesbian activist Barbra Gittings, who was one of the coordinators of the GLTF throughout the 1970s and 1980s, is often referenced for this argument. Though not a librarian herself, Gittings reshaped mainstream LGTBQ representation by advocating for inclusive catalog terms and by producing references for LGTBQ books.[9] LGTBQ accessibility is a recurring theme in historical analysis in non-U.S sources as well. For example, German historians found that young lesbian women often went for queer resources anonymously, causing lesbian librarians to push for equal and high-quality library services for them.[10] Overall, lesbian librarians pushed for proper representation for LGTBQ patrons, thus proving their importance to queer activism.

Some historians found that lesbian librarians created entirely new queer spaces with independent lesbian archives. The founders of these spaces felt excluded from LGTBQ librarian activism because there were few lesbian-specific publications in libraries, of which were more vulnerable to textual terrorism.[11] Furthermore, queer

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[7] Norman G. Kester, "Gay Histories/Gay Librarians: The Historical Development of a Gay Monograph" in *Daring to Find Our Names: The Search for Lesbigay Library History,* ed. By James V. Carmichael (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1998), 70.
[8] Yvonne Keller, "'Was It Right to Love Her Brother's Wife so Passionately?': Lesbian Pulp Novels and U.S. Lesbian Identity, 1950-1965," *American Quarterly* 57, no. 2 (2005): 401.; and Anne Enke, *Finding the Movement: Sexuality, Contested Space, and Feminist Activism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).
[9] Adler, "'Let's Not Homosexualize'", 479 and 482–483.; Poole, "'Tearing the Shroud," 530–532, 542.; and John DeSantis, "A Brief History of the ALA Book Award," *Lambda Book Report* 7, no. 6 (1999): 18, https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=shib&db=apn&AN=ALTP103031&authtype=shib&site=ehost-live&scope=site&custid=s8412973.
[10] Heike Seidel, "The 'Invisibles': Lesbian Women as Library patrons," *Progressive Librarian* 14 (1998): 34-36, http://www.progressivelibrariansguild.org/PL/PL14/034.pdf.
[11] "Textual terrorism" is used by Alisa Klinger to describe acts of vandalism on library books, including purposeful mishelving and marking books with offensive language or symbols. For a fuller definition, see Alisa Klinger, "Resources for Lesbian Ethnographic

archives prioritized the history of gay men while feminist archives claimed lesbian documents were not important parts of women's history. Some historians have emphasized their desire to preserve lesbian history with exclusive spaces open for lesbians to study, learn, and reference materials. They accomplished this by completely turning away from traditional archive standards, including staffing only lesbian volunteers and not using the LOC system for their collection.[12] The historiographical input reveals a unique approach to lesbian librarian activism, with breaking away from making traditional library institutions inclusive to develop new ones for lesbians instead.

I: Points of Access: Barbara Gittings, the GLTF, and the Gay Bibliography

In the early years of lesbian librarian activism, activist Barbara Gittings and the Gay Lesbian Task Force (GLTF) fought for access to LGTBQ books, making space for LGTBQ people in public media. The GLTF was the first professional American LGTBQ organization, and was established by the ALA's Social Responsibility Round Table in the 1970s to improve library services for LGTBQ patrons. The GLTF invited Gittings to join because of her extensive experience as an LGTBQ rights activist, and became one of the organization's main coordinators.[13] In her article *Gays in Library Land,* Gittings explains one of the earliest initiatives for LGTBQ accessibility was to make the "Gay Bibliography", which listed queer materials. The Gay Bibliography had been published by the GLTF once before, and the lesbian magazine *The Ladder* regularly reviewed lesbian literature in the *Lesbiana Column.* However, the 1971 revision Gittings helped create was far more extensive, and included pro-LGTBQ books, articles, periodicals. It was also updated with new entries yearly. The GLTF distributed the "Gay Bibliography" at ALA meetings, and invited the surrounding LGTBQ community to join, attracting many

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Research in the Lavender Archives," *Journal of Homosexuality* 3/4, no. 34 (1998): 207, https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=shib&db=apn&AN=ALTP58723&authtype=shib&site=ehost-live&scope=site.

[12] Rebecka Taves Sheffield. *Documenting Rebellions: A Study of Four Lesbian and Gay Archives in lesbian and gay Times (*Sacramento: Litwin Books, 2020*)* 77-78, 115-116.; Diani K. Wakimoto, Debra L. Hansen, and Christine Bruce, "The Case of LLACE: Challenges, Triumphs, and Lessons of a Community Archives," *The American Archivist* 76, no.2 (2013): 446, 448, http://www.jstor.org/stable/43490362.; and Polly Thistlethwaite, "The Lesbian Herstory Archives," in *Gay and Lesbian Library Service,* ed. Cal Gough and Ellen Greenblatt (Jefferson: Mcfarland, 1990), 62.

[13] "Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Round Table (GLBTRT) of the American Library Association," American Library Association, accessed December 11, 2022, https://www.ala.org/ala/glbtrt/welcomeglbtround.htm; Adler, "'Lets Not Homosexualize,'" 485; and Poole, "Tearing the Shroud," 542.

queer activists and readers.[14] By publishing the "Gay Bibliography", Gittings and the GLTF established themselves as a point of access for LGTBQ representation. This resource created a figurative space where LGTBQ people could safely locate queer literature. Furthermore, allocating it in ALA meetings exposed librarian attendees to the information needs of queer people, encouraging them to add the "Gay Bibliography" listings to their collections. Overall, by promoting lesbian and gay materials, Gittings and the GLTF reinstated the trust LGTBQ people in library spaces.

The promotional strategies of Gittings and the GLTF created an extensive support network for LGTBQ authors. In addition to the "Gay Bibliography," Gittings established the "Gay Book Award" to popularize queer publications. Though not officiated by the ALA until Gittings' final year of service in 1986, the GLTF started to bequeath it to books in 1971. The first "Gay Book Award" went to the lesbian period romance novel *A Place For Us* by Isabel Miller, which she self-published under the pen name Alma Armstrong. She initially struggled to sell her book to a publishing company, but the award helped her be recognized by a major publisher. She was then able to reprint the book as a hardcover with her new chosen title *Patience and Sarah*; Miller claimed the award communicated that "homosexuality is an interesting and valid subject for artists".[15] Essentially, the "Gay Book Award" promoted LGTBQ books in mainstream channels, allowing queer authors to create the representation their community wanted. Because of its connection to the ALA, the award gave Miller the negotiating power to get her book on the market and portrayed how she envisioned it. This empowerment of queer creatives helped them spread more accessible and positive LGTBQ literature, strengthening the queer literary space the GLTF supported.

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[14] Task Force on Gay Liberation, "A Gay Bibliography", found in the Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin Lahusen gay history papers and photographs collection*,* 1971, https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/1ceb5770-a73a-0137-4739-13b3e7d430d0.; Gene Damon, "The Lesbiana," *The Ladder*, 1957-1972, https://archive.org/details/the-ladder-1956-1972-lesbian-periodical/The%20Ladder%20Vol.%2001%2C%20No.%2001%2C%201956%20Oct/.; and Barbara Gittings, "Gays in Library Land: The Gay and Lesbian Task Force of the American Library Association: The First Sixteen Years," in *Daring to Find Our Names: The Search for Lesbigay Library History,* ed. James V. Carmichael (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1998), 83, 87.

[15] Barbara Gittings, "Gay Liberation: From Task Force to Round Table. (cover story)," interview by Leonard Kniffle, *American Libraries* 30, no. 11 (1999), https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=shib&db=lih&AN=2582198&authtype=shib&site=ehost-live&scope=site.; Gittings, "Gays in Library Land", 84.; and Baim, *Barbara Gittings,* 131.

A third promotional strategy from the GLTF was their newsletter, which provided a communication network for lesbian and gay librarians. The newsletter began in 1988 to keep GLTF members informed on ongoing initiatives and accomplishments. It also encouraged non-members to promote LGTBQ activism in their libraries, listing job and research opportunities with the GLTF and studies on LGTBQ-friendly library spaces. The newsletter also included diverse LGTBQ biographies, book reviews, and the "Gay Book Award " recipients to help with queer collection development and reader's advisory.[16] Although the GLTF created spaces for gay people to share and create media, it also created space for gay and lesbian librarians. It was especially difficult for lesbian and gay librarians to speak out against homophobia within their institutions. This newsletter assured librarians that supporting the LGTBQ rights movement would not cost them their careers. By showcasing the success of the organization and advertising ways to get involved, they could bring LGTBQ librarians together to combat homophobia in their workplace. In sum, the GLTF not only brought LGTBQ patrons into library spaces, but addressed the needs of LGTBQ libraries to advance their rights.

Although Gittings and the GLTF were leading activists for LGTBQ rights within libraries, other library organizations were involved. This included the PLG, which was established in the 1990s to combat library neutrality and bureaucracy culture. In 1993, the PLG newsletter published an article by German librarian Heike Seidel that argued libraries should be more accommodating to lesbian patrons. At the end of the article, there is a directory titled the "'Lesbians and Libraries' Resource List" that features the addresses and contact information of LGTBQ bookstores, with labels for exclusively lesbians spaces.[17] The "Gay Bibliography" created a representative space for gay librarians and readers to occupy while the "'Lesbian and Libraries' Resource List" provided physical ones. Physical locations are just as important to maintaining spaces for minoritized groups. According to historian Anne Enke, using tangible and public areas to create essential resources for said groups is a form of activism. It leads to the creation of new spaces that further uplift the oppressed while validating their identities.[18] This is especially true for libraries and bookstores, as it provides LGTBQ people with important information, representation,

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[16] *GLTF Newsletter* 1, no.1-3 (1988), https://alair.ala.org/handle/11213/7418/discover?filtertype=dateIssued&filter_relational_operator=equals&filter=%5B1988+TO+1989%5D.

[17] Seidel, "The Invisibles," 34-40.; and No author, "'Lesbians and Libraries': Resource List," *The Progressive Librarian*, (1998), 41-43. chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/http://www.progressivelibrariansguild.org/PL/PL14/041.pdf

[18] Enke argues this in context of the feminist movement, which was co-concurrent to GLTF activism in the 1960s. For further information, see Enke, *Finding the Movement,* 5.

and support. This list helps patrons who might not have had accepting libraries, providing them with places where they would find positive LGTBQ books hand-picked by LGTBQ people. Although not explicitly made by lesbian librarians, this source demonstrates the reach of librarians. Their connections with books and bookstores could build a web of resources for LGTBQ people to utilize.

Gittings and the GLTF created a space through highly accessible resources for the LGTBQ community. Using their connection to the ALA, they quickly spread information about LGTBQ publications, letting LGTBQ people create and share literary ideas with one another. Through their bibliography, book award, and newsletter, the GLTF provided their queer audience with many diverse source types and encouraged them to make new ones. Meanwhile, they made this audience visible to other professional organizations, like ALA committees and publishing companies. Their status as a professional networking space led them to take gay and lesbian publications more seriously, expanding the literary materials their audience had access to. Essentially, these promotional strategies helped normalize and publicize gay and lesbian identities for both groups.

II. A Crucial Resource: Local libraries, Local Lesbians

Lesbian librarians served as critical points of access for LGTBQ patrons, as their presence redefined the library space. Scholarship shows that gay subcultures were concentrated in urban areas and inaccessible to suburban and rural gay and lesbian people. In 1993 a North Carolina study on library satisfaction for lesbians found non-lesbians felt alienated from these subcultures because they believed them to be too radical and "cliquish, making them feel unwelcome. Libraries were one of the few and most prominent places where they could connect with their identity through queer materials.[19] However, librarians heavily restricted these resources to patrons. LGTBQ patrons recall library books being kept on specialized shelves that could be closed and locked like cages. lesbian pulp author Ann Bannon said that when she was a University student, these materials required written permission from a professor explaining why the student wanted access to it.[20] LGTBQ books were also underrepresented in libraries, as a study in 1999 found that only eleven out of

[19] Adler, "Let's Not Homosexualize," 482.; and E J. Whitt, "The Information Needs of Lesbians," *Library & Information Science Research,* 15, no. 3 (1993), 277-278. https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=shib&db=lih&AN=ISTA2900101&authtype=shib&site=ehost-live&scope=site.

[20] Cal Gough and Ellen Greenblatt, "Introduction," in *Gay and Lesbian Library Service* ed. Cal Gough and Ellen Greenblatt, (Jefferson: Mcfarland, 1990), XXII.; and Ann Bannon, "I Know my Books Saved Lives," interview by Roxy Bourdillion, *Diva Magazine*, (2019), https://diva-magazine.com/2019/05/14/ann-bannon-i-know-my-books-saved-lives/.

thirty-three select books that received the "Gay Book Award" were reviewed in major library journals, and few held copies of them.[21] Essentially, libraries further victimized isolated LGTBQ people. Having such small collections in cages reinforced the idea that homosexuality was immoral and criminalized. To get LGTBQ resources, patrons were forced to come out in an unsafe environment through a humiliating process, demonstrating the need for sympathetic librarians.

In some cases, the type of library a lesbian librarian worked in helped them connect with LGTBQ patrons. Jill Holman was an academic librarian at the University of Oregon in the mid-1990s and argued it was an ideal space for lesbian women. By the 1990s, academic libraries often had more lesbian books to support research for women's or feminist studies programs. This drew many LGTBQ librarians to academia because they wanted access to these collections, allowing lesbian students and librarians to meet. Students trusted these lesbian librarians because of their similar identities, sensitivity to confidentiality concerns, and ability to discreetly locate sensitive materials. Lesbian Librarians also became their role models, which Holman claimed combatted prejudice, lowers feelings of isolation, and acted as a suicide preventative.[22] In the previously mentioned 1999 study, it was found that 90% of the lesbian interviewees were college graduates.[23] When related to Holman's excerpt, it becomes clear that many lesbians in college came from middle-class backgrounds where they could not access lesbian spaces. Moving to universities granted students some anonymity, which lesbian librarians used to be informative guides to LGTBQ collections. The library skills combined with their experience as lesbians made them trustworthy to lesbian students, creating a space for them to safely explore their identities.

The presence of openly lesbian librarians also altered how library spaces operated, making them inclusive to LGTBQ patrons. Pauline M. Klein described that while working in a public library in Norcross, Georgia, she was the only openly gay librarian in her county's system. She fulfilled a unique mentor relationship for a highly diverse group, including teen lesbians and a grandmother raising her disowned gay grandson. Co-workers also referred questions about LGTBQ topics to her, and

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[21] Patricia Loverrich and Darrah Degen, "Out on the Shelves? Not Really," *Library Journal* 124, no.11 (1999): 55. https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=shib&db=a9h&AN=1972458&authtype=shib&site=ehost-live&scope=site.

[22] Holman, Jill. "Loving Women, Loving Learning- Linking the Lesbian and the Librarian," in *Liberating Minds: The Stories and Professional Lives of Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Librarians and Their Advocates*, ed. Norman G. Kester (Jefferson: Mcfarland & Company, 1993), 201-202 , 199-200.

[23] Whitt, "Information Needs," 277.

she was appointed to review the collection's LGTBQ materials. This allowed her to challenge homophobic headings that cataloged gay men solely in relation to AIDS, and lesbiphobic ones that generalized lesbian books with ones about gay men. Klein reported she extended the LGTBQ collection from fifty books to several thousand.[24]

Klein's openness about her identity was a conscious choice that changed the way her library saw LGTBQ patrons. Lesbian librarians provided insight into ideas and issues from their community, demonstrating to library staff how to address those needs and their heterosexism. Essentially, a lesbian librarian was a crucial resource for patrons and faculty alike, granting them the authority to make library spaces inclusive.

However, libraries were not always safe spaces for lesbian librarians themselves. Therefore, lesbian librarians were proactive in advocating for their inclusion too. Holman argued that although the GLTF had empowered many LGTBQ librarians, Oregan's anti-LGTBQ legislation created a homophobic culture in libraries. This isolated her from her co-workers, who rejected many of her recommended LGTBQ books. Likewise, Klein had been accused of being a communist while employed at a South Carolina academic library position, barring her from promotions and work in her skill level. Furthermore, Klein was expected to handle all education of LGTBQ resources, issues, and materials on her own. This added an additional and unpaid amount of intellectual and emotional labor, and absolved her co-workers of any responsibility for serving LGTBQ patrons.[25] To protect their roles in library spaces, sources show that lesbian librarians needed to be consistent and make connections. Holman and Klein made themselves indispensable by forming bonds with their LGTBQ patrons, but other lesbian librarians turned to each other.

In 1993, lesbian librarians Jane Aglin, Marie Hanson, and Judith Bagon sued the Minnesota Public Library for denying them health coverage for their partners since 1988. Despite the court ruling in their favor, the library still refused to provide the women benefits. Hanson stated they would continue to fight back, as

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[24] Klein, Pauline M. "Why Being Out is Necessary for Me", in *Liberating Minds: The Stories and Professional Lives of Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Librarians and Their Advocates*, ed. Norman G. Kester (Jefferson: Mcfarland & Company, 1993), 191-192.
[25] Holman, "Loving Women," 199-201.; Klein, "Being Out," 191; according to activist Audre Lorde, there is a social expectation for American individuals in oppressed groups to represent their entire community. Through this, they must educate the majority group about social issues caused by discriminatory social hierarchy. For further information, see Audre Lorde. "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference," in *Race, Class and Gender: Intersections and Inequalities,* 10th ed., ed. By Margaret L. Andersen and Patricia Hill Collins, (Boston, Cengage Learning, 2019), 11.

discrimination should not be tolerated within libraries.[26] The Minnesota Public Library sought to delegitimize their lesbian librarians' identity as faculty members in denying them employee rights and opportunities. However, Algin, Hanson, and Bahan were able to amplify their voices by coming together. Their connections made them powerful, the coordinated efforts of three different women making a strong case for their needs. They could not be ignored, proving relationships between lesbian librarians protected their inclusion within library spaces.

Although the work of the GLTF created a symbolic space for LGTBQ readers, writers, and librarians with connective resources, many physical libraries still excluded them. As such, individual activism from lesbian librarians was critical to changing library spaces. Local lesbian librarians were powerful and resourceful, using their library duties and queer identities to serve both the informational and socioemotional needs of LGTBQ patrons. They also formed support networks with LGTBQ librarians and patrons alike to stop discrimination from homophobic library staff. As such, they created physical library spaces by combating stereotypes, building collections, and mitigating LGTBQ isolation.[27]

III. A Symbiotic Relationship: The Lesbian Herstory Archives

Lesbian archives were a multilayered space that protected lesbian life from erasure. These social spaces contained historic materials that proved the importance of lesbian history and brought lesbian women together. The LHA was started by Joan Nestle and her former partner Deborah "Deb" Edel in 1975, who had been members of an advocacy group called the Gay Academic Union (GAU).[28] They were experienced in creating lesbian spaces, creating the GAU's women's Caucus (WC) to combat sexism from gay male members. Nestle wrote in her essay "The Will to Remember" that she and the WC collected lesbian documents for an archive in 1974 to protect lesbian culture from institutional patriarchal power. She further described in an LHA newsletter the archive as a space to heal from patriarchal dominance, as equal access to lesbian artifacts battled sexist and lesbiphobic distortions.[29] Lesbian

[26] Evan St. Lifer and Michael Rogers, "Lesbian Libns. Win Discrimination Suit," *Library Journal* 118, no. 1 (1993): 16, https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=shib&db=lih&AN=9301260411&authtype=shib&site=ehost-live&scope=site.

[27] Digital spaces for LGTBQ people did not exist until the 1990s. For information on how digital space can offer inclusive access, see Anne B. McGrail, Angel David Nieves, and Sioban Senier, *People, Practice, Power: Digital Humanities outside the Center*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2021).

[28] Sheffield, *Documenting rebellions*, 115.

[29] Joan Nestle, "The Will to Remember: The Lesbian Herstory Archives of New York," *Feminist Review*, no. 34 (1990): 87. https://doi.org/10.2307/1395308.; and Joan Nestle,

women were isolated because patriarchal narratives portrayed women as dependent upon men, and their existence as lesbians challenged that. Furthermore, gay men were oppressed because of their sexuality, but they still held privilege over women and dominated LGTBQ spaces. Nestle and the WC used archives as a space where they could hold power over their history and culture.

Sources show that lesbian women's informational needs were not met because many libraries practiced homophobic policies. Nestle expressed that anxiety extending to archives, with just the word "archive" sounding so formal that lesbians felt wary of it.[30] However, the state of New York did not recognize the LHA as an official archive because it was not up to building standards; this was because it ran out of Nestle's apartment, and would remain there for another twenty years. The LHA instead was a nonprofit charitable organization and educational foundation, something that Nestle stated kept the archive free from state cultural censorship.[31] To communicate the nontraditional nature of the archive, the LHA ran a traveling show that preserved more delicate materials while promoting engagement. Nestle and Edel traveled across the country to showcase the collection and the diverse lesbian identities and subcultures they represented. Nestle wrote this outreach strategy established the LHA as a unique space that joyfully celebrated all lesbian women.[32] The GLTF and independent libraries tried to make LGTBQ patrons feel welcome by creating integrative spaces for them in formal settings. The LHA is unique because it purposefully separated itself from formal spaces to make an entirely new one dedicated to all American lesbians.

The LHA revolved around the stories of its patrons, which Nestle described as being inclusive towards lesbian subcultures surrounding race, class, sexual habits, and more.[33] This was reflected in the LHA's monthly newsletter, which consistently called for patron donations. They were often requested for specific objects, like when the 1980 edition called for information about lesbian bars that existed before 1970. Likewise, the 1981 issue invited patrons to be interviewed for their "Lesbian Lives" tapes collection. Mabel Hampton's coming out story was featured as an example, who was a prominent working-class black lesbian activist and a key LHA leader. The section also mentioned a confidential file for any women who did not want to

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"One Woman's View," *LHA Newsletter,* (1979), chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://lesbianherstoryarchives.org/content/uploads/2020/08/News05.pdf

[30] Nestle, "The Will," 87; Sheffield, *Documenting Rebellions*, 122.; and Nestle, "The Will," 92.

[31] Sheffield, *Documenting Rebellions*, 112, 122.

[32] Nestle, "The Will," 87-88.

[33] Sheffield, *Documenting Rebellions,* 116.; and Nestle, "The Will to Remember," 88.

publicly identify as lesbians.[34] In other words, the LHA placed power in the hands of its patrons. Its collection policy let lesbian women decide what materials would tell their stories, shaping the collective memory of lesbian lives. Patrons also decided how and when their stories would be told, as the LHA staff was sensitive to the risks of being openly queer. Furthermore, it spotlighted the stories of nonwhite lesbians, with the presence of women like Hampton affirming they were critical parts of lesbian history.[35] Essentially, the LHA created a space for lesbians but allowed lesbians to define it. Their emphasis on memorializing donations created an authentic and highly inclusive picture of lesbian life.

The LHA newsletter itself also was used as an organizational tool, keeping its readers updated on news both inside the archive and outside in the larger lesbian community. The LHA provided listings of its collections, biographies, and finding aids to let patrons know what they have access to and what the archive still needed. It also highlighted collections of interest, such as the poetry collection in the 1978 edition and the short story collection in the 1979 one. Furthermore, the newsletter's ability to quickly contact hundreds of lesbians was used to connect their patrons to one another. Starting in the 1976 edition, the newsletter began writing the sections "research queries" and "archive needs", where LHA staff could request information and materials for specific patrons.[36] The newsletter even reported on important lesbian news, as seen in the 1981 edition where obituaries of lesbians were listed to support their disenfranchised mourners.[37] The LHA's collection was carefully

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[34] "A Call for Bar Names," *The LHA Newsletter,* July 1980, https://lesbianherstoryarchives.org/content/uploads/2020/08/News06.pdf; and "A Plea For Coming Out", *The LHA Newsletter* December 1981, https://lesbianherstoryarchives.org/content/uploads/2020/08/News07-1981.pdf.

[35] Sheffield, *Documenting Rebellions,* 126.

[36] Joan Nestle, "Poetry Collection: As of January 1978", *LHA Newsletter,* February 1978, https://lesbianherstoryarchives.org/content/uploads/2020/06/News04.pdf.; Joan Nestle, "Short Story Collection", *LHA Newsletter,* 1979, https://lesbianherstoryarchives.org/content/uploads/2020/08/News05.pdf.; "Research Queries: Do You Have Information?"*, LHA Newsletter,* March 1976, https://lesbianherstoryarchives.org/content/uploads/2020/06/News02.pdf.,

[37] "In Memory of The Voices We Have Lost", *LHA Newsletter,* December 1981, https://lesbianherstoryarchives.org/content/uploads/2020/08/News07-1981.pdf.; disenfranchised grief occurs when a loss is not recognized by society. Mourners for deceased LGTBQ people were often denied social support to help process grief. For a fuller definition, see Michael R. Leming and George E. Dickenson's *Understanding Death, Dying, and Berevement,* 6th ed. (Belmont: Wadsworth, 2006), 468. chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://reggienet.illinoisstate.edu/access/content/attachment/5788f968-8daa-4bd6-a9b3-a67d8ac33bd8/Messages/506bce92-ca87-

organized to meet patron's needs, and the newsletter gave them a platform to define what those needs were. Additionally, its obituaries ensured both the socioemotional and informational needs were fulfilled, making the LHA a space of solidarity. Overall, the newsletter communicated that the LHA was both a safe, tight-knit, and empowering space for lesbians.

The LHA was dependent on their patrons, sources indicating that while lesbians could shape the LHA, they were also responsible for maintaining it. As mentioned before, the LHA refused to officiate itself for their community's benefit, meaning it received no state funding. Starting in the 1978 edition, coordinators of the LHA regularly asked for financial donations as in the "We need your help" column. This was posted at the end of each issue, asking for a minimum of three dollars from patrons and for six from any academic institutions that used the archive. The newsletter also requested things that would improve the archive's functionality. When the LHA aquired an independent building in 1992, the following newsletter had an "An Archives Wish-List" column that asked for a simple fax and easy-to-use fax machine. Any donors would be listed and thanked by name in the following issue.[38] These sources indicate a bond between the LHA and its patrons. The LHA archives were dedicated to being as inclusive and accessible as possible. Its diverse patrons felt personally connected to the LHA, which prompted them to keep the space alive with donations, and by proxy the power it gave them.

The LHA is a stand-out example of lesbian information science activists creating spaces for LGTBQ patrons. Rather than speaking on the behalf of LGTBQ patrons to integrate them into library spaces, the LHA separated from formal institutions to make a space that patrons controlled. The LHA was solely for lesbians, excluding any patriarchal forces from gay men in academia to the New York State Government. It resisted a white and patriarchal historic narrative with a highly diverse collection, and used the collection to connect lesbians. The LHA archive was ideal for an emancipating space because the lesbian patrons created the collection with their materials. That personal connection and active participation in the archive created an environment they were truly a part of.

491a-af08-0a250576e825/Leming%20_%20Dickenson%20COPING%20WITH%20LOSS%2C%20BEREAVEMENT.pdf

[38] "We Need Your Help," *LHA Newsletter,* February 1978- December 1996, https://lesbianherstoryarchives.org/collections/newsletters/.; and "An Archives Wish-List", *LHA Newsletter,* June 1992, https://lesbianherstoryarchives.org/content/uploads/2020/06/News13.pdf.

IV: Conclusion

Lesbian librarians were some of the unsung heroes of the LGTBQ rights movement, moving quickly, though not quietly, to redefine library spaces for LGTBQ patrons and faculty. Gittings and the GLTF helped create supportive literary networks for queer readers and authors. Local lesbian librarians served as role models and leaders within libraries, protecting patrons and co-workers from common homophobic practices. Lastly, the LHA built a grassroots historic space to give lesbian women a space entirely separate from heterosexist educational institutions. They were able to make such rapid progress towards the acceptance of lesbian and gay people in society by making lesbian and gay-centric yet highly visible library spaces. Their efforts prioritized their patrons, addressing their needs for representation and resources rather than trying to depend on the tolerance of mainstream heterosexist society. This attitude empowered their patrons, encouraging them to enter public spaces and reinstate their identities as valid and deserving. All the while, lesbian librarians marched alongside them, using their library skills to support their entrance with literary and historic resources, as well as communal connections to explore their identities lovingly.

Rohingya Refugee Crisis: Double-edged Consequences on Bangladesh and the Rohingya Community

By Tahsina Nasir

On a dark night in 2017, Tourist Police stopped all the buses going from *Cox's Bazar*, a southeastern district in Bangladesh, to *Dhaka*, the capital city, to check for Rohingya refugees inside. Despite doubts regarding the accuracy and efficacy of this check, the Bangladeshi government conducted this procedure to prevent Rohingyas to spread outside of their designated shelter and integrate with the Bangladeshi population. 800,000 Rohingyas migrated to Bangladesh from Myanmar in 2017, and in the last five years, the refugee population has grown to nearly 1.4 million people. As Bangladesh is a densely populated country, the government could not think of hosting the refugees for long and aimed to repatriate them to Myanmar soon. Therefore, it sought to keep the Rohingya refugees both safe and separate by providing various amenities in designated shelters mostly in the *Cox's Bazar* district.

The refugee crisis in Bangladesh began in August 2017 when hundreds of thousands of Rohingya individuals crossed the border into Bangladesh to escape the Myanmar military's brutal persecution. UN estimation indicated that approximately seven hundred thousand Rohingya have entered Bangladesh over two consecutive months. Even though the crisis is now in its fifth year, discussions about the Rohingyas' return have remained unrealistic and ineffective. The governments of Bangladesh and Myanmar have held bilateral meetings and signed agreements on the repatriation of Rohingya Muslims, but Myanmar has shown no further willingness or progress in this area. It has also been pushed back by the International Court of Justice's genocide case against Myanmar and the military's forcible takeover of power in Myanmar.

Although the international community has lauded Bangladesh for accommodating the Rohingya refugees, the community has not adequately supported the developing nation in addressing the multitude of challenges posed by the ongoing crisis and identifying a sustainable resolution. Since independence in 1971, Bangladesh has been grappling with internal bureaucratic problems, high population density, poverty, criminal justice, corruption, and a dearth of infrastructure development on a limited budget. A survey conducted in 2018 determined that a significant number of refugees currently reside in the country, thereby making the resolution of the refugee population's needs a critical issue for the host nation.

The protracted conflict between the Myanmar government and the Muslim Rohingya community in the Arakan region of western Myanmar is a complex issue that has deep historical roots. The Rohingya are an Indo-Aryan ethnic group located in the Rakhine state of Myanmar, tracing their origins back to the 12th century.[1] Despite their long-standing presence in the region, the Myanmar government has not recognized the Rohingya as citizens since the country's independence from British colonial rule in 1948. Authorities have alleged that the majority of Rohingyas are of Indian or Bangladeshi descent and came to Myanmar for employment opportunities during the colonial era. The 1982 Burmese Citizenship Act effectively stripped Rohingyas of their citizenship rights, subjecting them to persecution by the Myanmar military, including extrajudicial killings, sexual violence, arbitrary detention, and torture. Buddhist extremists in Myanmar have carried out acts of harassment and violence against the Rohingya Muslims, driven by an extreme form of nationalism and religious belief that emphasize the supremacy of the Burmese Buddhist identity and the exclusion of those deemed to be outsiders, including the Rohingya. These individuals view themselves as the original inhabitants of Myanmar and perceive the Muslim Rohingya population, whose religious values differ from their own, as inferior, and unwanted. This has contributed to a cycle of violence and persecution that has led to a significant number of Rohingya refugees seeking shelter in neighboring countries. The United Nations has classified the heinous acts committed against the Rohingya population in Myanmar as ethnic cleansing. As a result, the Rohingya people have had to flee to Bangladesh in three phases throughout the 20th century. Approximately 500,000 Rohingya refugees arrived in Bangladesh during the first two phases in 1978 and 1992, but they were later repatriated to Myanmar.[2] The most recent and third phase, which occurred in 2017, has had a significant impact, whose multifaceted effects are being investigated by scholars.

The Rohingya Refugee issue is a topic of great historical significance, primarily due to the complex geographic and historical aspects involved. The Rohingya Muslim population has resided in Arakan, which was previously known as Rosang for several centuries. Given its coastal location, Rosang (Arakan) had maintained significant cultural and commercial ties with foreign countries since

[1] Francis Wade, *Myanmar's Enemy Within: Buddhist Violence and the Making of a Muslim 'Other'* (London: Zed Books, 2017).
[2] Azeem Ibrahim, *The Rohingyas: Inside Myanmar's Hidden Genocide* (London: Hurst, 2016).

ancient times. Arab traders had been sailing to Rosang for centuries, fostering cultural and business relationships. This led to the conversion of Rosang people to Islam, further bolstering Muslim numbers in Arakan. In 1826, following the "Treaty of Yandabo," Arakan was ceded to British India, and in 1948, with Burma gaining independence, Rohingya Muslims attempted an unsuccessful insurrection to create an independent Arakan state. As a response to the uprising, Myanmar imposed restrictions on their education, culture, and movement.[3] In 1989, Arakan was renamed "*Rakhine*" in honor of Buddhists, and the mispronunciation of Rosang gave rise to the name Rohingya. For decades, Myanmar's Rohingya community has been subjected to prejudice, marginalization, brutality, and persecution. In 2017, the Myanmar military resumed its crackdown on the Rohingya population, leading historians to broaden their scope of inquiry.

Scholars have examined the causes, consequences, and solutions to the Rohingya refugee crisis in Bangladesh. Navine Murshid's paper, "Bangladesh, Copes with the Rohingya Crisis by Itself," highlights how Bangladesh has provided refuge to the Rohingya despite the Burmese government's denial of their citizenship. Additionally, She also regards extremist groups within the refugee camps exploiting religion and emotions as a critical issue.[4] Scholars such as M. Faye, M.S. Islam, and N. Sudheer have extensively examined the connection between the Rohingya crisis and the prominent Muslim religion in Bangladesh, as well as its impact on community development.[5] Iftikhar Bashar's paper, "Exploitation of the Rohingya Crisis by Jihadist Group: Implications for Bangladesh's Internal Security," analyzes how extremist groups take advantage of the refugees' vulnerability by promoting religious fanaticism, drug trafficking, and weapons smuggling. This has led to a disruption of the environment inside and outside the refugee camps, posing a threat to Bangladesh's internal security.[6]

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[3] Carlos Sardiña Galache, *The Burmese Labyrinth A History of the Rohingya Tragedy* (London: Verso, 2020).
[4] Navine Murshid, "Bangladesh Copes with the Rohingya Crisis by Itself," *Current History* 117, no. 798 (2018): 129–34. https://www.jstor.org/stable/48614340.
[5] Nivedita Sudheer and Debanjan Banerjee. "The Rohingya refugees: a conceptual framework of their psychosocial adversities, cultural idioms of distress and social suffering," *Global mental health* (Cambridge, England) vol. 8 e46. (December, 2021). doi:10.1017/gmh.2021.43
[6] Iftekharul Bashar, "Exploitation of the Rohingya Crisis by Jihadist Groups: Implications for Bangladesh's Internal Security," *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses* 9, no. 9 (2017): 5–7. http://www.jstor.org/stable/26351550.

Before 2017, Bangladesh had already provided asylum to a prior wave of Rohingya refugees. The UN refugee agency aided approximately 35,000 Rohingya who sought refuge in Bangladesh in 1992, when over 250,000 Rohingya refugees fled to Bangladesh in the second phase of the Rohingya refugee crisis. In 2017, however, the Bangladesh government took responsibility for the refugees via public and private efforts. Ishrat Hossain's work "After Humanitarianism" examines Bangladesh's Rohingya policies, and discusses the changes made since the situation worsened.[7] The report outlined the government's efforts to provide aid, establish education programs, ensure security, initiate diplomatic actions, and improve shelter for the refugees. C R Abrar's work "Multilevel Approaches to Human Security and Conflict Management: The Rohingya Case" analyzed internal issues among the Rohingya and their resolutions. The scholar also contends that an appraisal of human security and obligations to safeguard refugees ought to be meticulously evaluated and integrated into the policymaking of the host country and other entities involved in the crisis.[8] Environmental awareness has also been a crucial issue for the refugee camps, with various health and human rights researchers studying how the Rohingyas have adapted to the new environment in Bangladesh since the establishment of the Cox's Bazar city Rohingya camp in 2017.

The Rohingya people, whose identities are characterized by their intersectionality of class, religion, and geography, have suffered from persecution owing to Myanmar's nationalist policies. Scholar Guhathakurta looks at violence against Rohingyas in refugee camps in Bangladesh in her paper called "Understanding Violence, Strategizing Protection." The paper highlights the difficulties faced by this group, including the exclusionary nationalist policies of the Myanmar state and the general hostility exhibited towards them by the host community on account of their ethnic identities.[9] Although the host community initially offered assistance to refugees, their increasing participation in social and economic activities brought about a change in host attitudes. The Rohingya crisis has had significant economic and environmental impacts on Bangladesh, as Islam and

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[7] Ishrat Hossain, "After Humanitarianism: Bangladesh's Evolving Rohingya Policy," *German Institute of Global and Area Studies* (2020). http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep27059.

[8] 7 C.R Abrar, "Multilevel Approaches to Human Security and Conflict Management: The Rohingya Case," *S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies,* (2013). http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep05811.

[9] Meghna Guhathakurta, "Understanding Violence, Strategizing Protection: Perspectives from Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh," *Asian Journal of Social Science* 45, no. 6 (2017): 639–65. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26567209.

Ullah's research reveals.[10] The crisis has caused local job losses, income reductions, and a drastic shift in the socio-economic structure of Teknaf and Cox's Bazar which are among the southernmost regions of Bangladesh, were chosen as the locations for the development of Rohingya refugee camps.[11]

Bangladesh's government and citizens have defended Rohingya refugees on humanitarian grounds since the onset of the refugee crisis.[12] The government has attempted to facilitate the safe return of Rohingyas through bilateral meetings and agreements with Myanmar. However, Myanmar's reluctance to find a sustainable solution has led to the failure of these efforts. Banarjee's research paper, "The Rohingya Crisis and Its Impact on Bangladesh-Myanmar Relationship," highlights that Myanmar's government has taken no action to repatriate Rohingyas, ultimately causing the relationship between the two countries to deteriorate.[13]

The protracted Rohingya refugee crisis in Bangladesh, which began in 2017, has resulted in an almost doubling of the population. Despite establishing 34 camps for the refugees, the provision of adequate shelter has been a challenge since the outset of the crisis. To address this matter, the Bangladeshi government proposed a new shelter project, relocating 100,000 Rohingya to Bhasanchar Island. The proposed relocation has engendered significant scholarly debate regarding its justification and stability related to livelihoods of refugees. In their paper entitled "Implications of the Rohingya Relocation from Cox's Bazar to Bhasanchar," Md. Didarul Islam and Ayesha Siddika explore concerns regarding the quality of education and health services on the island, as well as the safety of refugees on a remote island in the midst of the sea, the Bay of Bengal.[14] To ensure the relocation's success, host countries must systematically address these concerns. The proposed

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[10] Aynul Islam, “Economic and Social Impact of the Rohingya Crisis,” *Center for Enterprise and Society*, (2017). https://ulab.edu.bd.

[11] S M Asik Ullah and Kazuo Asahiro and Masao Moriyama and Masakazu Tani, “Socioeconomic Status Changes of the Host Communities after the Rohingya Refugee Influx in the Southern Coastal Area of Bangladesh” *Sustainability* 13, no. 8 (2021). https://doi.org/10.3390/su13084240.

[12] David Lewis, "Humanitarianism, civil society and the Rohingya refugee crisis in Bangladesh," *Third World Quarterly* 40, No. 10 (2019): 1884-1902. DOI: 10.1080/01436597.2019.1652897

[13] Sreeparna Banerjee, “The Rohingya Crisis and its Impact on Bangladesh-Myanmar Relations,” *ORF Issue Brief* No. 396, (2020)

[14] Md. Didarul Islam and Ayesha Siddika, "Implications of the Rohingya Relocation from Cox’s Bazar to Bhasanchar, Bangladesh," *International Migration Review*, (2021). doi:10.1177/01979183211064829.

relocation has also generated controversy because it might not provide a long-term solution to the crisis. In "The Rohingya Crisis: Human Rights Concerns, Policy Concerns, and Burden Sharing," editor Nasir Uddin debunks myths and highlights realities surrounding the Rohingya and their relocation, arguing that policymakers in both international and host countries should prioritize a long-term resolution rather than a temporary one.[15]

Many scholars have discussed the Rohingya people's history and the long-running refugee crisis over time. In 2017, researchers expanded their research on the Rohingya refugee crisis as the Myanmar government's crackdown on the Rohingya grew more severe, and many Rohingya fled to Bangladesh. This paper builds upon existing studies that have explored the history of the Rohingya people and the refugee crisis and furthermore traces the impact of the Rohingya refugee crisis on Bangladesh as a host country, with a particular focus on the economic, security, and environmental consequences. The paper is divided into two sections, drawing on a range of sources, including newspaper articles, local worker case studies, and national and online archives. In the first section, I argue that the prolonged presence of a large number of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh has had a significant impact on the economy, environment, internal security, and indigenous people of the host country. This has negative implications for both the refugees and the local community. The presence of refugees has had adverse effects on the host country's economy, such as diverting funds from the domestic budget to support them and placing a burden on the local community's finances. Additionally, many criminal syndicates are exploiting the vulnerable situation of refugees by offering economic and social support in exchange for illegal activities, thus exploiting their unmet basic needs. In the second section of the paper, I demonstrate that the relocation of the Rohingya community from Cox's Bazar camps to Bhasanchar Island has been a contentious issue, necessitating that the Bangladeshi government takes responsibility for ensuring a long-lasting and viable solution that benefits both Bangladesh and the Rohingya community as refugees.

Multipronged Economic Implication

Since the onset of the crisis, both the Bangladeshi government and international organizations have provided the refugees with financial and other forms of support. Nonetheless, the Rohingya people find themselves in a precarious situation in densely populated refugee camps due to an array of factors. Prolonged

[15] Nasir Uddin, *The Rohingya: An Ethnography of 'Subhuman' Life* (USA: Oxford University Press, 2020).

stays in the same location and the Bangladeshi government's inadequate management of the camps have left the refugees feeling helpless, leading many to venture outside the camps to meet their basic financial needs.[16] The disbursement of funds has been characterized by systematic delays in allocating pledged funds, ultimately putting a strain on the host country's economy. As such, while supporting the Rohingya refugees, the Bangladeshi government has also had to contend with this issue, which has had a significant impact on the country's economy.[17]

When the crisis began in 2017, economist Selim Raihan, a professor of economics at the University of Dhaka and executive director of the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM), estimated that Bangladesh would require 1,033,200,000 US Dollars per year to address the financial needs associated with the crisis. This figure was based on the World Bank's "moderate" poverty threshold.[18] At the onset of the third phase of the Rohingya refugee crisis in Bangladesh, around November 2017, the amount of funds allocated for the crisis represented 2.5 percent of the country's total national revenue and accounted for over 13 percent of the government's social security budget. Moreover, there is a steady rise in the number of Rohingya refugees seeking asylum in Bangladesh. The expenditure of providing essential items and maintenance arrangements for the refugees has surged in relation to their increasing numbers, while assistance from organizations such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is decreasing.[19] Based on the most recent report from the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG), a United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs' organization responsible for managing donations for Rohingya refugees, the Joint Response Plan (JRP) has allocated $943 million for the provision of assistance to the Rohingya refugees and local communities in Cox's Bazar in 2021. However, Bangladesh has received a meager amount of $322 million, which accounts for only 34% of the promised aid, in the first eight months of 2021. Statistical data indicates that

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[16] *Shampratikdeshkal*, "রোহিঙ্গা প্রত্যাবাসন কতদূর?" ("How far is Rohingya repatriation"), February 22, 2022.
[17] *Prothom Alo*, "বাংলাদেশের অর্থনীতিতে বিপদ কোথায়?" ("Where is the danger in the economy of Bangladesh"), October 10, 2017.
[18] *Bangla Tribune*, "রোহিঙ্গাদের জন্য মাথাপিছু ব্যয় হবে ৬ হাজার টাকা: সিপিডি" ("The per capita expenditure for Rohingyas will be Tk 6,000: CPD"), November 2, 2017.

[19] *Jaago News*, "রোহিঙ্গা সংকট: মুখ ফিরিয়ে নিচ্ছেন দাতারা" ("Rohingya Crisis: Donors are turning their backs"), October 2, 2021.

international humanitarian organizations provided a total of 2.62 billion dollars in financial aid, which the response groups tasked with assisting the Rohingya community during the period spanning August 2017 to September 2021 secured.[20] Consequently, the US provided an additional 160 million dollars in grants in September to meet the targeted donations. Due to the uncertain nature of foreign donations and the anticipated further decline in their availability, Bangladesh government has been allocating funds for Rohingya refugees from its own treasury in recent years. The authorities maintain that had the donors committed to providing aid for an extended period rather than renewing it intermittently based on the evolution of the crisis, the current situation could have been averted. Unfortunately, Bangladesh is now burdened with the responsibility of ensuring humanitarian aid for 1.4 million Rohingya refugees.[21]

The involvement of refugees in the local community as workers is a recurring topic in discussions about the refugees' impact on the host country. Bangladesh is no exception to this rule. As financial support diminishes and the Bangladesh government struggles with implementing long-term measures, Rohingya refugees are pursuing low-paying employment to improve their economic situation. The shared history of British colonial rule and cultural similarities between the Cox's Bazar region in Bangladesh and the Arakan province in Myanmar allowed the Rohingya refugees to absorb the language and acquire new skills rapidly. Thus, enterprising refugees working in the local professions managed to improve their economic status while many Bangladeshis saw their fortunes drop as the competition heated up.

There has been extensive research into the economic impact of the ongoing refugee crisis on the local community. According to these studies, the lack of proper planning and the Bangladesh government's inability to adequately address the refugee crisis is the reason why Rohingyas are becoming involved in local professions. When the Bangladeshi government established camps in Cox's Bazar and Teknaf to shelter the significant number of Rohingya refugees, it did so on property that had been the local community's acquired hereditary lands, which they

[20] *Bangladesh Pratidin*, "কী প্রভাব পড়বে বাংলাদেশে" ("What will be the impact in Bangladesh"), September 12, 2017.
[21] *Deutsche Welle*, "রোহিঙ্গাদের আশ্রয় দিয়ে বহুমাত্রিক ঝুঁকিতে বাংলাদেশ" ("Bangladesh is at multidimensional risk with the shelter of Rohingyas"), December 19, 2017.

donated based on humanitarian considerations.[22] For a long time, the people of this region have been cultivating salt by preserving seawater on the beach and drying it in the heat of the sun. The Bangladesh government, on the other hand, has used most of the land available previously for salt cultivation to construct shelters for Rohingya refugees. These salt farmers initially provided shelter to the Rohingyas on their land for humanitarian reasons, but this has now restricted their professional and economic progress. While the Bangladeshi government has been sheltering the Rohingyas for a long time, locals who are economically dissatisfied are venting their frustrations on the Rohingya refugees. Consequently, there is a sense of tension in the community, which affects both the Rohingya and the locals.

The incompetence of the local and international administration in managing the refugee camps harms not only local people like salt farmers, but also the community at large. *Cox's Bazar* is one of Bangladesh's most popular tourist destinations.[23] When the Bangladeshi government first offered refuge to the Rohingyas in 2017, it had a significant impact on the region's hotel and tourism industries.[24] The significant presence of Rohingya refugees in the region instilled a sense of apprehension among both residents and tourists regarding embarking on vacations within the area. Furthermore, when many international organizations began to focus on the refugee crisis, commodity prices began to rise automatically in this region. Many tourists believed that the crisis's persistent effect on security measures, as well as the escalating costs of essential goods, could impede their travel plans and impose a financial burden upon them. The government of Bangladesh has been unable to control the price in any way.[25] Therefore, the Rohingya crisis and the government's failure to control prices stymied the region's tourism industry.

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[22] *BBC Bangla*, "বাংলাদেশের কক্সবাজারে রোহিঙ্গাদের জন্য স্থানীয় জনগোষ্ঠীর জীবনজীবিকাই এখন প্রচন্ড চাপের মুখে" ("The livelihood of the local people is now under great pressure"), January 20, 2018.
[23] *The New Nation*, "Cox`s Bazar tourism sector faces serious setback," November 14, 2017.
[24] *Ittefaq*, "রোহিঙ্গা অনুপ্রবেশে কক্সবাজারে বিপর্যয় বাড়ছে" ("Disaster is increasing in Cox's Bazar due to Rohingya infiltration"), February 22, 2022.
[25] *The Financial Express*, "Tourism Takes Yet Another Hit from Rohingya Influx," May 05, 2018.

National Security at Stake

The administration of refugee populations is inherently complicated because of the potential security risks posed by the religious, cultural, and economic diversity of refugees. The fact that the Rohingya refugees primarily identify as followers of the Islamic faith has played a crucial role in the continuing refugee crisis in Bangladesh.[26] This has led to the intensification of religious militancy already present in Bangladesh, the host nation, with negative consequences for both the Rohingya refugees and the local population. It is essential to emphasize that religious or extremist militancy can emerge when members of a certain faith use violent and aggressive measures to further their cultural or religious goals. Given that Bangladesh is predominately a Muslim country, jihadists and other religious militant groups have already attempted to take advantage of the Rohingya refugees' vulnerabilities, escalating security concerns.[27] Since both groups practice the same religion, religious fundamentalists use their power to persuade Rohingya refugees to engage in criminal activity by convincing them that they are acting in accordance with Islamic teachings, which will ultimately bring them eternal bliss and provide them with financial support in exchange for their commitment. Many Bangladeshi religious militant and extremist groups have attempted to politicize Rohingya refugees' religion and make them engaged in unjust and criminal activities, such as human trafficking, the selling of firearms and drugs.[28] The formation of extremist groups within the camps, their violent criminal activities, and the inability of the Bangladeshi government to address the problem have all contributed to rising worries over the internal security and well-being of the Rohingya refugees.

Bangladeshi security specialists believe that the Rohingya refugees' vulnerability, mental instability, and religiosity may lead to the emergence of religious militancy in the region. Since both the Rohingyas and Islamic extremist factions identify themselves as Muslims, thereby providing a platform for these groups to capitalize on the refugees under the pretext of Islamic principles. By manipulating and distorting Islamic doctrines, these groups may instigate violent and

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[26] Iftekharul Bashar, "Exploitation of the Rohingya Crisis by Jihadist Groups: Implications for Bangladesh's Internal Security," *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses* 9, no. 9 (2017): 5–7. http://www.jstor.org/stable/26351550.

[27] *Asia News Monitor*, "Bangladesh: Bangladesh Moves to Control Outbreak of Gang Violence at Rohingya Camps," October 09, 2020.

[28] *Deutsche Welle*, "Rohingya militants active in Bangladeshi refugee camps," September 24, 2019.

belligerent political activities amongst the Rohingya community.[29] There have been cases of killing, kidnapping, and threatening of female charity workers who were deemed to be inappropriately dressed in the eyes of these Islamic militant groups. As a result, instability is rising throughout the surrounding camp areas. At least four terror groups are active in Rohingya camps, and their members are involved in the production of counterfeit currency and the trafficking of drugs. The *Arakan* Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) and the Rohingya Solidarity Organization (RSO) are two of these groups.[30] *Islami Mahaj* and *Jamiatul Mujahideen*, two new organizations, have joined them. ARSA has a stranglehold on 26 of the 32 Rohingya refugee camps. Although these organizations identify themselves on paper as advocates for the rights of Muslim Rohingya refugees in Myanmar, actually they have engaged in a number of violent and aggressive activities while justifying it in the name of upholding justice and religious principles.

According to a report by DW News, over 3,000 ARSA soldiers have recently fled Myanmar and sought refuge in Bangladeshi refugee camps.[31] According to further investigation, ARSA's original goal was to fight for the Rohingya's independence and to ensure that Rohingya people in camps follow proper Islamic practices. However, the situation became murkier when Rohingya leader Mohibullah was assassinated in September 2021 in Kutungpal, a Rohingya camp in Cox's Bazar.[32] Following allegations of his association with the Rohingya Solidarity Organization (RSO) in Myanmar, Mohibullah fled Rakhine province in 1992 and sought refuge in Bangladesh where he has been actively engaged in facilitating the repatriation of Rohingya refugees while pursuing his objectives.[33] Since forming his organization, Arakan Rohingya Society for Peace, and Human Rights (ARSPH), in 2000, he had been working on Rohingya repatriation and rights. The sources contend that the Arakan Salvation Army (ARSA), under the leadership of Attaullah Abu Ammar, murdered Muhibullah. The Bangladesh police have filed a charge sheet with

[29] *Prothom Alo*, "নানা ঝুঁকির মুখে আমাদের নিরাপত্তা" ("Our Security at Risk"), September 22, 2021.
[30] *Dhaka Post*, "The existence of ARSA and the security of the Rohingya camp," November 18, 2021.
[31] *Deutsche Welle*, "Rohingya militants active in Bangladeshi refugee camps," September 24, 2019.
[32] *Asia News Monitor*, "Bangladesh: Stateless Rohingya Refugees Sucked into Booming Bangladesh Drug Trade," Mar 02, 2017.
[33] *Somoy News*, "ভয়ংকর হয়ে উঠছে রোহিঙ্গা শিবির" ("The Rohingya camp is becoming terrible"), November 9, 2021.

the Senior Judicial Magistrate Court of Cox's Bazar, indicating that Muhibullah's assassination was premeditated due to his advocacy for granting citizenship to the Rohingya community in Myanmar, opposition to their trafficking to other countries, and condemnation of various crimes such as rape, murder, extortion, and drug trafficking. Muhibullah's organization, ARSPH, was also founded to realize the rights of the Rohingya people and promote peaceful repatriation, earning him the respect of the community and frequent interactions with international diplomats and representatives. However, security analysts had previously predicted that Muhibullah's differences with ARSA leaders, particularly Jununi, would eventually lead to his death. The contrasting objectives of the Arakan Salvation Army (ARSA) and Muhibullah concerning the Rohingya refugee crisis are believed to have contributed to the murder of Muhibullah. While ARSA sought to exploit the situation, Muhibullah aimed to bring justice to the refugee crisis. The killing has created a more complicated situation in the camp since his death.[34]

Nonetheless, in the aftermath of Mohibullah's assassination, the plight of the Rohingya camps has once again become apparent. According to various newspaper interviews, the majority of people in the refugee camps want peace and obey the orders of Bangladesh's law enforcement agencies. However, several extremist organizations, including ARSA, incite unrest in the camps, persecuting not only Rohingya but also Bangladeshis who live nearby. ARSA claims it is not involved in any terrorist activities and that its main goal is to assist Rohingyas in obtaining citizenship in Myanmar. Their presence in refugee camps, however, has created havoc for both locals and refugees.

Human rights activists assert that refugee camps are typically prone to conflict because of overcrowding. Moreover, it is a matter of concern that criminal activities are on the rise.[35] The security forces are active during the day, but, for reasons never explained, not at night. Both the refugees and the locals face numerous challenges because the Bangladeshi government has failed to provide adequate security. Kidnappings and ransom demands are on the rise in the Rohingya camps and surrounding areas. Since 2020, many Rohingya and locals have been killed for

[34] *Prothom Alo, "*নতুন মাত্রায় রোহিঙ্গা শরণার্থী সংকট*"* ("Rohingya refugee crisis in new dimensions"), October 30, 2021.
[35] C.R Abrar, "Multilevel Approaches to Human Security and Conflict Management: The Rohingya Case," *S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies,* (2013). http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep05811.

failing to pay a proper ransom.[36] Locals refer to the abductions' perpetrators as "kidnapping forces." The purpose of these forces is to abduct Rohingya refugees and local residents of the Teknaf and Ukhia camps, and extort a ransom, which is then utilized for illicit activities. These factions frequently engage in confrontations to establish their supremacy and exercise authority over the camps.[37]

Rohingya refugees have resorted to various means to leave the camps, even though their actions are illegal under Bangladeshi law. Why do they take such drastic measures? The lack of essential facilities in the camps force, the refugees to seek a better arrangement elsewhere. In addition, the refugee population, who are in a vulnerable situation, is regularly misled and exploited by locals, who entice them to leave the camps and engage in illegal activities for their own malicious purposes. While the local police and camp authorities have been trying to locate fleeing refugees, they have not yet addressed the root causes that are forcing these refugees to leave in the first place. The Bangladesh Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has launched investigations into a Bangladeshi group allegedly producing fake documents for Rohingya Muslims. The ACC has identified employees of travel agencies, passport offices, and public officials in the Chittagong district involved in the illegal activities. The preliminary phase of the investigation has yielded the passport information of 150 Rohingya suspects, and over 78 Rohingya refugees have been arrested from Passport Offices in *Chittagong*.[38] Additionally, there have been reports of counterfeit Bangladeshi passports that allowed refugees to leave the country for good and settle abroad. Given the potential risks of promoting illicit activities pertaining to forging identification documents, the matter has undoubtedly raised apprehensions regarding the safety and security of both the refugees and the host communities.[39]

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[36] *Asia News Monitor*, "Bangladesh: Bangladesh Moves to Control Outbreak of Gang Violence at Rohingya Camps," October 09, 2020.
[37] *Rising BD, "*রোহিঙ্গাদের সংঘর্ষ, সন্ত্রাসী কর্মকাণ্ডে আতঙ্কিত স্থানীয়রা" ("Locals Terrorized by Rohingya Clashes and Terrorist Activities"), October 23, 2021.
[38] *Sarabangla, "*রোহিঙ্গাদের পাসপোর্ট বানানোর চক্রে 'ট্রাভেল এজেন্সি-জনপ্রতিনিধি*"* ("'Travel Agency-People's Representative' in Rohingya Passport Making Cycle"), September 19, 2019.
[39] *New Age,* "Corruption in passport forgery must be contained," February 5, 2022.

Adverse Effect on Indigenous Community

Since Bangladesh gained independence in 1971, there has been tension between the government and indigenous communities in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), a region encompassing three districts in the mountainous southeastern area of the country which his home to various autonomous tribal groups.[40] Historically, these groups paid taxes to their local ruler, but after independence the Bangladeshi government assumed direct control. However, some indigenous groups sought independence by separating from Bangladesh and it was only in 1997 that a peace agreement, in which the tribes accepted the government's structure and arrangements, was signed between the Bangladeshi government and representatives from the Chittagong Hill Tracts.[41] However, these representatives did not speak for all tribes, and armed rebellions and attacks against the government remain an issue. The ongoing Rohingya refugee crisis has further complicated the situation, especially in *Bandarban*.

Bangladesh's *Bandarban* district is located in the CHT region, which shares a land border with Myanmar. At various times, even before the current crisis, Rohingyas have attempted to take refuge in this hilly area of Bangladesh to avoid being persecuted by the Burmese Army. Beginning in 1978, when the Myanmar army began to persecute the Rohingyas, they have been fleeing to Bangladesh, settling in the Lama, Naikshangchhari, and Alikadam neighborhoods of *Bandarban*. As refugees, they were helped by the Bangladeshi government and the hill tracts area tribal community.[42] However, as Myanmar's Rohingya Genocide worsened in 2017, large numbers of Rohingya sought refuge in areas of *Cox's Bazar, Teknaf,* and the *Chittagong Hill Tracts*. Despite knowing about the negative consequences of Rohingya refugees engaging in criminal activities and their impact on indigenous locals, the government took no steps to shelter the refugees elsewhere. The mountainous terrain of the region makes it difficult to monitor criminal activity, such as the smuggling of foreign weapons and drugs, including marijuana and alcohol. Importing drugs or alcohol without a license is illegal in Bangladesh, but smuggling and the sale of goods without paying the necessary taxes remain prevalent. The arrival of Rohingya refugees has exacerbated the issue, as local gangs lure them into illegal activities with promises of quick money and resources. However, refugees'

[40] *The Daily Star*, "Why is peace still missing in the CHT," December, 2021.
[41] Nazila Ghanea, *Minorities, Peoples and Self-Determination* (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2005), 117.
[42] *Hill Voice*, "Rohingya Crisis and CHT Problem," October 5, 2020.

resort to engaging in hazardous activities because they lack the necessary documentation to obtain basic benefits through legal means, and therefore, they turn to such dangerous activities as a means of fulfilling their fundamental needs. Various criminal syndicates, such as ARSA and RSO, are now attempting to expand their operations by utilizing the Rohingyas in Bangladesh. Ultimately, the indigenous people are suffering from the effects of their proximity to the Rohingya camps.[43]

The issue of forced religious conversion and land acquisition has been a longstanding and pressing concern in the Chittagong Hill Tracts region throughout history During British rule, these districts were given autonomy and were primarily inhabited by Buddhists, tribal, and indigenous people. The absence of a formal government under British imperial rule meant that these people had exclusive rights to the land and other possessions in the region. However, following Bangladesh's independence from Pakistan in 1971, the new government attempted to bring the CHT under direct administration. This led to Muslim citizens from other parts of the country settling in the area, causing tension between the new settlers and the hill tribes who saw them as outsiders. Additionally, after independence, the Bangladeshi government threatened and forcefully relocated Bengali settlers to the CHT region with the intention of fostering Bengali nationalism among the indigenous tribal communities and eradicating their distinct tribal identities. Despite cultural and religious differences, the two groups attempted to coexist. However, some Bengali settlers used their power and position to occupy land belonging to indigenous and tribal populations, leading to prolonged conflict and displacement. The lack of power and resources on the part of the indigenous people has made it challenging for them to reclaim their land and possessions, leading to continued unrest in the region.[44]

The power dynamics in the Chittagong Hill Tract (CHT) area have become complex due to various factors. Although the region has been inhabited by tribes for centuries, they have been unable to resist the Bengali settlers' occupation of their lands. These settlers have illegally occupied tribal lands for tourism, forestry, horticulture, and rubber plantations, among other purposes. The government has failed to take appropriate action to protect the tribal communities despite their complaints, and the army deployed to maintain peace has been accused of torturing tribal members. Influential members of the ruling Bangladeshi political party have

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[43] *Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti*, "Report on Human Rights Situation of Chittagong Hill Tracts," March 12, 2022.
[44] Amena Mohsin, *The Politics of Nationalism: The Case of the CHT* (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 1997)

also forcibly occupied tribal lands in the name of tourism.[45] The arrival of Rohingya refugees has further complicated the power dynamics in the region. The vulnerability of the Rohingya refugees has made them easy targets for exploitation. Locals with influence have been threatening and misusing Rohingya refugees for their own interests, for example by forging documents that allowed them to occupy tribal lands as Rohingya refugees. Furthermore, many refugees have become involved in these crimes out of fear for their lives as ARSA and other criminal groups have coerced them into joining criminal activities, such as drug and weapons trafficking. The manipulation of refugees and politicization of existing issues have enabled powerful Bangladeshi individuals to seize tribal lands and living areas. This situation has exacerbated issues such as land grabbing and forced settlement for the hill tribes.

The forced conversion of Buddhist tribes to Islam has been a long-standing issue in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) of Bangladesh. The Bengali settlers, the only ones, practicing Islam in the region, have been forcibly trying to convert Buddhists to Islam to increase their numbers and power in the region.[46] The Bangladesh Army, border guards, and local administration are trying to prevent these abusive and heinous acts, but the recent Rohingya refugee crisis has exacerbated the situation. Some of these radical Muslim groups are trying to relocate Rohingya refugees to the hilly areas of Bangladesh, promising them non-existent economic and social opportunities. These groups primarily aim to increase the number of Muslim settlers to counter the Buddhist indigenous or tribal groups in the region. Bangladeshi Muslim settlers have previously been involved in forced conversions, and the arrival of Rohingya refugees has provided an opportunity to convince an even greater number of individuals to convert.[47] Therefore, many radical Muslim organizations are exploiting the religious identity of Rohingya refugees to relocate them to lands that have already been forcibly acquired from indigenous Buddhist communities. Their objective is to shift the demographic and religious balance in favor of Muslims and consolidate their power and influence in the region based on religious affiliation. This has led to an increase in the number of new Muslims dubbed Aslama or people who newly acquired Islam as religion since 2019, who have formed several organizational and political entities. Terror groups are also

[45] *Al Jazeera*, "Attacks, land grabs leave Bangladesh's Indigenous groups on edge," July 30, 2021.
[46] *Hindustan Times*, "Rights group accuses Bangladesh of ethnic cleansing, pushing Buddhists out with Rohingya refugees from Myanmar," February 20, 2017.
[47] *Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti*, "Report on Human Rights Situation of Chittagong Hill Tracts," March 12, 2022.

taking advantage of the situation, using the Rohingya refugees to participate in criminal activities such as drug and sex trafficking.[48] To prevent radicals and terror groups from using Rohingya refugees for their wrongful purposes and politicizing the Chittagong Hill Tracts issue, the government should institutionalize the process of relocating the refugees to hilly areas.

Amplified Environmental Threat

The Bangladeshi government established the Rohingya camps as a temporary solution when the refugee crisis resurfaced in 2017. Their plan was for the refugees to return to Myanmar as quickly as possible.[49] As a result, the infrastructure in the Rohingya refugee camps was poor, lacking proper health and hygienic conditions. In short, these refugee camps are hazardous to the Rohingya refugees' health and pose a serious threat to Bangladesh's climate and overall environment.

Bangladesh, a country particularly vulnerable to it, is attempting to address climate change issues. It is projected that over 19 million Bangladeshi individuals will be displaced as climate refugees by 2050, primarily due to the southern region's occupation of low-lying areas susceptible to land loss from rising seas, droughts, and other climate-related disasters.[50] Along with these, the Rohingya refugee crisis is exerting an environmental impact on Bangladesh. To establish the 34 refugee camps for Rohingya refugees in 2017 the Bangladeshi government had to set aside 9.4 square miles of forest land. The deforestation of forest lands has had a significant impact on the climate, as it has resulted in the felling of numerous trees. This has also triggered a host of environmental disasters in the region, including landslides and soil erosion, owing to the dearth of trees. Moreover, locals are taking advantage of situation as well: they cut down forests in the camp areas, thereby destroying both the biodiversity and natural resources in the region. The camps' poor management also puts the area inside and around the camp at risk of environmental degradation.[51] These dangers include soil erosion; landslides, which have already cost many Rohingyas and locals their lives; declining groundwater levels, and the invasion of

[48] *Dhaka Post*, "New JMB meeting at Rohingya camp, training in Bandarban," August 11, 2021.
[49] *Prothom Alo,* "রোহিঙ্গা বসতির কারণে ৬ হাজার একর বন উজাড়" ("6,000 acres of forest destroyed due to Rohingya settlement"), September 17, 2018.
[50] *Banglanews24*, "Rohingya crisis damaging Bangladesh environment, says Hasina at COP25," December 3, 2019.
[51] *The Daily Star*, "Rohingya Settlements: 8,000 acres of forests razed," October 18, 2019.

these communities by wild elephants. As it is the area where the Rohingya camps are located has long been a sanctuary for wild elephants.[52] Rabid elephant attacks on local communities and refugee camps have increased alarmingly in the last five years because of deforestation, movement obstructions due to the establishment of refugee camps, and a lack of protected sanctuaries. Thus, relevant authorities should take immediate and drastic measures to address the massive level of environmental destruction that has taken place in the country due to the mismanagement of the local administration regarding Rohingya refugees' sheltering process.

The Remote Island Bhasanchar

The small and remote island of Bhasanchar lies between the Meghna River and the Bay of Bengal and was chosen as a project by the Bangladeshi government for a temporary shelter for Rohingya refugees. In June 2018, the Office of the Commissioner for Refugee Relief and Repatriation completed the biometric registration of Rohingyas, and the relocation project aimed to provide a safe living environment for 100,000 refugees on the island while constructing the necessary infrastructure for the sustainability. Initially, the project proposed land and shore protection, construction of barrack houses, shelter stations, religious shrines, naval office buildings, housing for internal and external security, water supply infrastructure, watchtowers, and electrical substations.[53] With the proper establishment and the smooth transitioning process, the Bangladeshi government hoped the relocation would improve the situation for both locals and Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar and Teknaf, and that the relocated Rohingyas would have a new, fulfilling life on Bhasanchar Island. However, from the outset of the proposal, international communities and organizations had grave concerns regarding the relocation process. These concerns included the safety of the relocation process itself, the consideration of the agency of the refugees prior to relocation, the sustainability of the project's proposed infrastructure, and the overall well-being of the Rohingya refugees who would be relocated. It was essential to thoroughly evaluate these issues to ensure the feasibility and sustainability of the proposed relocation process while prioritizing the care and attention given to the refugees' agency during the decision-making process.[54] The relocation process began in

[52] *The Financial Express*, "Humans Occupy Forest, 28 Elephants Die in Last Five Years in Cox's Bazar," November 23, 2021.
[53] Maher Sattar, "Bangladesh to Relocate Rohingya to an Island," *New York Times*, February 01, 2017.
[54] Nasir Uddin, *The Rohingya: An Ethnography of 'Subhuman' Life* (USA: Oxford University Press, 2020).

December 2020 despite concerns from both Bangladeshi and international organizations that the refugees would be more vulnerable on the island. Additionally, human rights groups have expressed concern over the risk of floods in Bhasanchar, and the food and medical assistance provided by international organizations may not be possible in Bhasanchar due to geographical reasons, and travel to the island is only possible by boat from *Hatia*, which is in the mainland, taking two to three hours. Furthermore, the Bay of Bengal in Bangladesh has a history of emerged islands being vulnerable to erosion and dissolution, which raises the question of whether the same might be true for Bhasanchar Island. Therefore, it remains a matter of worry whether the Bangladeshi authority has thoroughly evaluated the sustainability of the island's formation and its ability to withstand the natural forces that could impact it.[55] In spite of the objections of international organizations, the Bangladeshi government remains optimistic about the project and believes that the Rohingyas will be able to live in Bhasanchar with far better facilities than in Cox's Bazar's 34 temporary, densely populated camps. Thus, the feasibility of relocating Rohingya refugees to the remote island of Bhasanchar remains a highly contentious issue.[56]

Moreover, the Bhasanchar area has been a risky and accident-prone area for climate change from the very beginning of the formation in 2006. There is also an outbreak of piracy in the coastal areas of Bangladesh. If the local security forces cannot protect the Rohingyas from it, experts assume that human trafficking will start. For these reasons, international organizations were skeptical of the project's effectiveness from the start.

The Bangladesh government's goal has been twofold from the beginning: there was the intention to provide adequate assistance; and there was to be no assimilation into Bangladeshi society. Rohingya refugees who have spent five years in exile in Bangladesh are hesitant to return to Myanmar. Some refugees are preoccupied with planning their lives once they return to their home country, while others are searching for ways to survive despite being unable to work legally in Bangladesh. Noor Mostafa was just 13 years old when he and his family fled the violence in Myanmar and sought refuge in neighboring Bangladesh. He initially expected to remain in Bangladesh for a few months to a year, but he never imagined

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[55] *The Business Standard*, "বছরে ২০ বর্গ কিলোমিটার ভূমি বাড়ছে বাংলাদেশের" ("Bangladesh's land is increasing by 20 square kilometers per year"), October 11, 2021.
[56] *Jugantor, "*এক লাখ রোহিঙ্গার জন্য প্রস্তুত ভাসানচর*"* ("Bhasanchar ready for one lakh Rohingyas"), February 10, 2019.

the resettlement process would take so long, potentially up to six years. "As a community, we are eager to leave this place, but we cannot predict when that will happen. We will depart if it is Allah's will, and if the international community puts pressure on Myanmar to resolve the issue," commented Noor Mostafa. In contrast, Nur Begum expressed concerns about returning to Myanmar, saying, "Myanmar has become an increasingly controversial topic for us. Whenever I think about returning, I remember the violence committed by the Myanmar army. What do we have to return to? I would consider returning only if conditions were more favorable for us." While the Bangladeshi government wants the refugees to return home safely, it is still a contentious issue because the refugees have been deeply ingrained in Bangladeshi culture and life.[57] Therefore, according to the government, it will be more difficult for Bangladesh to repatriate Rohingya refugees to Myanmar or any other country if they integrate into different sectors with the local population. By implementing a fully equipped shelter project in Bhasanchar, the government hoped to give the Rohingya refugees a new and better life. However, it is critical to determine whether the government was able to provide adequate assistance to the relocated refugees on Bhasanchar Island, as claimed.

Aftermath of the Relocation

Since December 2021, the government has relocated the Rohingyas from various camps in *Cox's Bazar* to Bhasanchar. The relocation process was carried out with the full consent of the Rohingya refugees, at least according to the Bangladesh government.[58] The Rohingya refugees, on the other hand, are dissatisfied with the camp administration's hasty decisions. They complained that they didn't have enough information and couldn't properly prepare, making the move difficult. However, there have been reports that the Rohingya community is vehemently expressing their discontent with the relocation process. The authorities promised each Rohingya family a monthly allowance or cows to raise cattle. Many Rohingyas, on the other hand, report that the monthly food rations they receive in Bhasanchar are insufficient and that the educational institutions for the children remain lacking. They were initially also promised that they would be allowed to visit their relatives in *Cox's*

[57] *BBC Bangla*, "রোহিঙ্গা সংকটের ৫ বছর: রোহিঙ্গারা কি মিয়ানমারে ফিরে যেতে চায়?" ("5 Years of Rohingya Crisis: Do Rohingyas Want to Return to Myanmar?"), 25 August, 2022.

[58] *BBC Bangla*, "ভাসানচরে রোহিঙ্গা: 'সরকার কথা রাখেনি, আমরা ফিরে যেতে চাই'" ("Rohingya in Bhasanchar: 'Government has not kept promises, we want to go back'"), February 22, 2021.

Bazar, but that is no longer the case. As a result, they are obligated to spend all their time on this island, which is taking a toll on their emotional well-being.[59]

On the island, the Rohingyas are dissatisfied not only with the economic situation, but also with the health care system. Rohingyas who arrived on the island sick have complained to the BBC that they are not being treated properly. In a BBC report, Halima, a Rohingya woman who was relocated to Bhasanchar, described her traumatic experience. She was in labor just a few days after arriving on the island. Despite his best efforts, Halima's husband was unable to locate the necessary doctors or health workers on the island. As a result, Halima gave birth to her child with the help of a Rohingya midwife who had traveled with them to Bhasanchar. Consequently, Halima believes the government failed to deliver on its promises of reliable health care, while her husband, Enayet is also dissatisfied as the government did not provide him with promised land on which to keep cows and buffaloes. In short, they did not, get the chance to start an economically self-sufficient life on the island as they had hoped. Refugees also claim that their food rations are being reduced. Initially, the government provided monthly ration consisting of rice, dal, oil, and salt to the each relocated Rohingya family. According to the BBC, it weighed 13 kg at first, but has since dropped to 9 kg. . Moreover, although there are government convenient stores where refugees can purchase groceries, the relocated Rohingyas often lack the financial means to buy these essential items, such as fresh meat, fish, or vegetables. Therefore, surviving solely on rations is becoming increasingly difficult for them. That is why they are requesting that the Bangladeshi government arrange jobs for them on the island to earn a living if they must remain. Zahirul Islam, a Rohingya teacher from the *Kutupalong* refugee camp, told a regional newspaper that he and his family had volunteered to move to Bhasanchar in December 2020 in the hope of a better life. Upon arrival, however, he saw a different picture. "The rationing and medical systems are both in disarray here. What will people do if they must stay here? We're only staying the night in a brick house because we don't have any other options. I attempted to flee but was unsuccessful, and those caught fleeing from Bhasanchar were severely beaten. Seeing all of this, I am no longer attempting to flee. In a nutshell, we're living a 'captive' life with our entire family here."[60] The firsthand account of Zahirul Islam who volunteered to move to Bhasanchar in the hope of a better life, highlights the appalling living

[59] *Kaler Kantho*, "ভাসানচরে কাজ ও নগদ টাকার দাবিতে রোহিঙ্গাদের বিক্ষোভ" ("Rohingyas protest in Bhasanchar demanding work and cash"), May 31, 2021.
[60] *BBC Bangla,* "রোহিঙ্গা: ভাসানচরে হঠাৎ কেন তাদের বিক্ষোভ?" ("Rohingya: Why their sudden protest in Bhasanchar"), May 31, 2021

conditions on Bhasanchar island, where refugees are subjected to rationing and medical systems in disarray, as well as physical violence for attempting to flee, making it clear that the relocation has not resulted in a better life for the Rohingya people.

Meanwhile, a Rohingya refugee from *Teknaf's Hniler Alikhali* camp told a newspaper reporter that several Rohingyas from the surrounding camp had moved to Bhasanchar, along with his relatives. "We talked to them on the phone, and they are not satisfied with the relocation in Bhasanchar," he said, according to the news report. Due to various reasons, the majority of Rohingya refugees wish to return to their former camp in Cox's Bazar. One of the main issues on Bhasanchar Island is the inadequate access to sustenance resulting from food rationing, which has affected many refugees. Additionally, the lack of financial independence, including limited job opportunities, has been a major concern for the Rohingya community. Despite seeking assistance from Bangladeshi authorities, their situation has not improved. The inability to meet with loved ones in other camps has also left many refugeees feeling isolated and unsupported. Furthermore, the uncertainty of ever returning to their previous camp and reuniting with their loved ones has compounded their distress.[61]

The Rohingya population on Bhasanchar Island has been protesting due to a lack of resources and access to essential facilities. In May 2021, UNHCR officials visited the island at the Bangladeshi government's invitation to assess the situation. The local administration appointed several Rohingya individuals as Focal Points to represent the rest of the community to UN officials. However, many Rohingyas were dissatisfied with this arrangement, as they felt that the focal points might not convey the truth to the UN. Consequently, some Rohingyas protested in front of UNHCR officials, demanding an increase in monthly allowances, employment opportunities, better medical treatment, and other facilities. However, the island authorities prevented refugees from entering, and island police arrested those involved in the protests. In June, after that incident, M. Rafiqul Islam, a senior chief petty officer of the Navy's Forward Base in Bhasanchar, filed a case with the police station over the incident. It was revealed by the police investigation that the protests were sparked by Rohingyas who wanted to talk to the UN staff directly. While law enforcement authorities managed to quickly bring the situation under control, subsequent legal

[61] *Asia News Monitor*, "Bangladesh: Rohingya Protest Against Living Conditions on Bangladesh Island." June 2, 2021.

proceedings have led to concerns among the Rohingyas residing on the island. There have been reports of widespread arrest threats on the island, and according to BenarNews, many Rohingya have tried to flee due to these fears.[62]

Upon their arrival in Bhasanchar, the Rohingya expressed various concerns regarding the living conditions and resources available to them. The island as such is a remote and dangerous environment. Although there are shore protection measures and dams in place to prevent flooding, water frequently seeps into the low-lying island during the rainy season, affecting the shoreline area of the island. Cyclones occur every year in Bangladesh due to the low pressure created in the Bay of Bengal, according to the usual climate. Many Rohingyas are justifiably now concerned about being or having been relocated to this flood and cyclone-prone region, many even want to return to previous camps in *Cox's Bazar* because of their fears and lack of opportunities. Many of the relocated Rohingyas are clearly dissatisfied, as evidenced by the above incidents. Therefore, it's become difficult for them to live on a remote island against their will day after day. Despite the Rohingyas' repeated requests, the authorities have not increased their food rations. Consequently, they are experiencing a food shortage. They wanted to work and earn money as well, but the government did nothing to help them. Since many people in Bangladesh are still unemployed despite receiving an education, the government is finding it difficult to make new arrangements for the refugees. In August 2021, High-ranking UN officials visited Bhasanchar to assess the Rohingya refugees' situation. The Rohingyas wanted to inform these officers about their unmet needs. The Bhasanchar Authority, however, forbade them from doing so. Accordingly, the Rohingya refugees in Bhasanchar are dissatisfied with their new surroundings. They claim that the Bangladeshi government does not prioritize their needs and wishes as refugees. Due to these inconsistencies, Rohingyas were often in the process of fleeing from Bhasanchar. There were also cases of boats sinking and refugees being apprehended by the police while attempting to flee Even then, this tendency to flee did not stop. As per the statement of the officer in charge of Bhasanchar, around six Rohingyas were in the process of fleeing with falsified documents. However, a considerable number of them had voluntarily returned after being apprehended by the police and realizing that the forged documents would not enable them to achieve any favorable outcomes

[62] *Benarnews,* "Rohingya protests in Bhasanchar: 15 detained, refugees in fear of arrest," June 6, 2021.

for themselves.[63] According to reports, a group of fourteen Rohingya women, men, and children drowned in the sea while attempting to flee their homeland. The refugees were trying to reach different areas of Chittagong and Noakhali, but many are being detained by Bangladesh law enforcement, including around 200 Rohingyas from these areas. Additionally, some Bangladeshi individuals are helping the Rohingyas escape in the hope of gaining an unjust advantage, and authorities have detained around 16 people on such charges.[64] Moreover, some of the Rohingya refugees who have been relocated to Bhasanchar have become embroiled in these wrongdoings, possibly due to the lack of a proper solution to their problems. Despite the Bangladeshi government's attempts to prevent the refugees from fleeing, it has failed to address the underlying issues that drive them to take such measures. This has further complicated the government's decision to relocate them to Bhasanchar, where inadequate facilities have left many refugees with no other options.

Conclusion

The conflict between the Rohingya people and Myanmar's government has a long history. Therefore, it is strongly asserted by experts that the resolution of the Rohingya refugee crisis will require a significant amount of time. The analysis presented here highlights a new phase in the refugee crisis caused by the proximity of refugees to indigenous populations and the drug trafficking route. Furthermore, the shared religious beliefs of Bangladeshi and Rohingya refugees have led to politicization and exploitation of religious differences, further complicating the situation. Had Bangladesh initially provided the Rohingya refugees with shelter in a different area, many problems could have been avoided. However, the long land border between Bangladesh and Myanmar in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, which is close to the Rohingya camps, has compounded the crisis. Additionally, the Rohingya refugees are involved in drug and human trafficking with Myanmar, taking advantage of the land border and the infamous "Golden Triangle" route. Consequently, their presence in the area has heightened historical tensions between the indigenous people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts and the Bangladeshi government regarding religion and land acquisition.

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[63] *Deutsche Welle,* "ভাসানচরের রোহিঙ্গাদের পলায়নে বিরক্ত প্রশাসন" ("The administration is upset over the escape of Rohingyas from Bhasanchar"), August 26, 2021.

[64] *Ekushey News*, "ভাসানচর রোহিঙ্গা ক্যাম্প থেকে ৩ দালাল আটক" ("Brokers arrested from Bhasanchar Rohingya camp"), October 13, 2021.

As a developing country, Bangladesh is currently grappling with numerous internal crises. This makes it uncertain whether there is a genuine desire and ability to provide adequate assistance to the many Rohingyas in need. It is understandable how challenging it is for the Rohingya refugees to survive in exile without a permanent address or in a chaotic environment. For this reason, it is crucial for the Bangladeshi government, international aid groups, and the United Nations to collaborate and work towards solving the refugee crisis. It is imperative to address the issue of Rohingya refugees and the host country of Bangladesh by seeking a resolution that acknowledges the agency of both parties while minimizing adverse effects, regardless of their nationality.