

Recounting the Past

A Student Journal of Historical Studies
at Illinois State University

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Note from the Editor

The History Department is honored to recognize graduate and undergraduate student research through the journal, *Recounting the Past*, as well as the faculty who mentor these emerging scholars. Because each essay analyzes how societies construct, alter, and imagine identity, readers will find core connections to ideological movements driving individuals to discover or recreate their socioeconomic positions. The essays demonstrate the variety of action possible and the diverse interpretations made by historians regarding those actions. Thus, these students note how interpretation—whether in a museum exhibition, classroom, public arena or published work—persuade and often direct the contours of historical thinking.

Special thanks goes to several individuals for their work in the production stages: Sandra Harmon for loaning us the cover images; Linda Spencer, Administrative Aid in the History Department for her organizational expertise; and History students Dominic Garzonio and Sarah Jensen for their fine editorial skills and patience; and the hard working University Marketing and Communications team which smoothly kept this project moving through the maze of print protocols.

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Exhibition Identity in a New Century: The Missouri History Museum and The 1904 World's Fair

By Beth Caffery

On April 30, 1904, Louisiana Purchase Exposition Company President David R. Francis formally launched the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, also known as the 1904 World's Fair. In 2004, the Missouri History Museum launched the exhibit "1904 World's Fair: Looking Back at Looking Forward" to celebrate the expositions centennial. The essay assesses that exhibit using both a post-colonial and post-structuralist framework to understand the original intent of the 1904 exhibits.¹ Post-colonialism emphasizes the need of using a different group of people against which to identify one's self, particularly a national identity following colonial rule, such as with the United States acquisition of the Philippines in 1898. In post-structuralism, the intended meaning of the author is of less importance than the meaning that the viewer understands, accentuating the importance of the author's, (or in this case,) exhibit creators', expression and celebration of that identity.² During the World's Fair, there were opportunities for learning about those put on display by the Department of Anthropology, but it was up to the fairgoer to make the choice to understand what the living displays stood for. Similar choices remain for viewers of the 21st century exhibit. A glorious show greeted the first fairgoers as organizers had constructed almost 1,500 buildings across 1,200 acres of a redesigned Forest Park. Yet the fairgrounds stood for something much larger than an amusement park as it linked Westward expansion, economic power, and cultural movements. Intellectual engagements with the past through anthropology, ethnography, and archaeology had become a traditional feature of nineteenth century expositions. To demonstrate both the progress of man and the superiority of industrial society, the Louisiana Purchase Exposition displayed the most extensive anthropology exhibits of any world's fair.³

The exhibits continue to blur the lines between anthropology and entertainment. Visitors to the Missouri History Museum experience the 1904 Exposition through photographs and artifacts from "The Pike" integrated with

¹ Missouri History Museum Library and Research Center (Hereafter MHM), "1904 World's Fair: Looking Back at Looking Forward," http://www.mohistory.org/content/fair/wf/html/index_flash.html (accessed October 9, 2007).

² The possession of the Philippines justified the exhibit, and similarly, the exhibit validated the attainment of the Philippines. The displays perpetuated the belief that Western society was superior. Fair-goers were excited to see their recent colonial attainment, and they were quick to compare themselves against the Filipino groups. The other groups displayed offered other comparisons for visitors to observe.

³ R.W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Vision of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1913* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 160.

anthropology interests. With over a hundred years passed, viewers are still missing out on W.J. McGee's goals of two distinct entities on one fair space. The on-line exhibit loaded on the Missouri History Museum's website presents a better image, showing the harsh reality of how cultural groups turned into sideshow curiosities. Website visitors are able to make their own interpretations about the Fair and the goals of McGee because they are being told the story about the Department of Anthropology without the events taking place along the Pike being thrown into the mix. To make an accurate critique of modern day exhibits, one must first research who was in attendance at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, what visitors of 1904 thought, and what messages these displays were sending to the public at the time.

The Louisiana Purchase Exposition was not the first time that anthropology had been part of a world's fair. It had been used in previous exhibitions to push ideologies. As early as 1853, people from around the world were being displayed for entertainment, profit, and public instruction. Phineas T. Barnum introduced a variety of exotic people in New York at the "Crystal Palace" fair, including a group of "man-eaters" from Fiji, hundreds of Native Americans representing dozens of tribes, and "the Wild Man of Borneo."⁴ Native Americans were shown in Philadelphia at the 1876 Centennial Exposition.⁵ Ethnographic communities became a vital component in 1889 at the Paris Exposition. In 1893, at the World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago, Frederick Ward Putnam, head of the Department of Ethnology and Archaeology, continued this trend towards ethnographic displays because he "deeply believed in the public function of anthropological presentation." Putnam suggested that "These peoples, as great nations, have about vanished into history, and now is the last opportunity for the world to see them and to realize what their condition, their life, their customs, their arts were four centuries ago."⁶ For Putnam, their presence was vital to this. With the cooperation of anthropologist Franz Boas, the anthropological displays at the World's Columbian Exposition created a baseline where the progress of civilization, particularly western civilization, could be observed and calculated.⁷

This trend continued well into the 20th century. During the summer of 1903, W.J. McGee was selected to be chief of the Department of Anthropology at the Fair.⁸ He had been working for the Bureau of American Ethnology in

⁴ Curtis M. Hinsley, "The World as Marketplace: Commodification of the Exotic at the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893," in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, ed. Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (United States: Smithsonian Institution, 1991), 345.

⁵ Hinsley, "The World as Marketplace," 346.

⁶ Hinsley, "The World as Marketplace," 347.

⁷ Hinsley, "The World as Marketplace," 350.

⁸ James W. Vanstone, "The Ainu Group at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, 1904," *Arctic Anthropology* 30, no. 2 (1993): 77.

Washington D.C. He declared that his goal for the World's Fair Department of Anthropology would be to portray human progress from the "dark prime to the highest enlightenment."⁹ McGee hoped to "form a picture of Man and his Works."¹⁰ He believed that in order to illustrate the association between the categories of mankind and to show the path of human progress that the "simple works of the lower types" needed to also be displayed. The focus, however, of the Department of Anthropology was "man's study of man rather than his products."¹¹ The Department wanted to illustrate people "still living in the stone age, others just at the beginnings of metal workings, and others engaged in primitive pottery making."¹² In order to do this, McGee proposed the use of living human beings displayed in their native environments as object lessons, thus an "anthropology reservation" contained what McGee referred to as "out-of-door exhibits."¹³

Plans were well underway for the "out-of-door exhibits" by the early months of 1904. Groups to be put on display at the Fair included the Ainu of Japan, African Pygmies, "Patagonian Giants" from Argentina, a variety of Filipinos, and representatives from an assortment of Native American tribes.¹⁴ However, the anthropological displays were not the only place where fairgoers could view Native groups. "The Pike" was a mile-long entertainment addition depicted as a "living color page of the world." The Pike was made up of concession stands where visitors could be entertained by visiting a mock Chinese village, simulated cliffs complete with Hopi and Zuni dwellers working on handicrafts or performing dances, a Moorish palace, or Eskimos living a polar landscape. Tourists had the chance to view small-scale societies from around the world in two different frameworks. Fairgoers could observe people going about their daily activities at the anthropology reservation or as commercial showcases along The Pike where the focus was on amusement.¹⁵ Noting the difference between the anthropological displays and the Pike is crucial to understanding how visitors misunderstood the purpose of each exhibit. The Pike was specifically designed to amuse guests while the Department of Anthropology aimed to educate. However, fairgoers failed to use the living displays for education, and instead found amusement in them.

⁹ W.J. McGee, "Anthropology," *World's Fair Bulletin* 5, no.4 (1904): 9.

¹⁰ W.J. McGee, "Department N: Anthropology," in *Official Catalog of Exhibitors. Universal Exposition St. Louis, U.S.A. 1904*, ed. David R. Francis (St. Louis, Missouri: The Official Catalog Company, 1904), 9.

¹¹ Diane Rademacher, *Still Shining! Discovering Lost Treasures from the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair* (St. Louis: Virginia Publishing Corporation, 2003), 25.

¹² "Pigmies and Giants: Race Exhibits Planned by Department of Anthropology," *World's Fair Bulletin* 4, no.12 (1904): 19.

¹³ Vanstone, "The Ainu Group," 77.

¹⁴ Vanstone, "The Ainu Group," 78.

¹⁵ Vanstone, "The Ainu Group," 78.

The Department of Anthropology had created what they claimed was intended to be an educational experience and a baseline to compare westernized progress and industrialization. Fairgoers' viewed something else and their interpretations of the out-of-doors exhibits did not parallel what W.J. McGee and his staff had wanted to achieve. People were likely confused due to the fact that there were indeed people showcased for the strict purpose of entertain, and they failed to draw the distinctions. Despite the goals lay out by the Department of Anthropology, the way the living displays were shown offered little difference in material from what the Pike had to offer. Perhaps fairgoers were not given proper clarification of the intentions of the Department of Anthropology. Then again, maybe visitors decided to ignore the objectives and make their own conclusions based on what they saw.

At the time of the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition, there was a general interest in Native American cultures throughout the United States. The Bureau of Indian Affairs hoped to make the most of this curiosity and worked to create a valuable demonstration for the Fair to show government efforts to find a solution to the "Indian Problem." In 1902, Congress appropriated \$40,000 to be used to create an exhibit "to show progress in education and industry as sponsored by government programs." Samuel McCowan was put in charge of the exhibit. When appointed to the position, he was working as superintendent of Chilocco Indian School in Oklahoma. A common belief was that westernized education would also westernize Native Americans therefore allowing them to assimilate into American society. McCowan's idea was to create a large school that would be in operation during the Fair. Students would hail from a variety of Indian schools from around the United States. They would be given the chance to show visitors what they had learned or play in the student band. The problem with this idea was that fairgoers were seeing American Indians as one distinct society, when in fact there were a number of tribes each involved with their own culture. Viewers were not given the opportunity to see the diversity among the Indians. By displaying Native Americans as one cultural group, it would appear to visitors that there was a single cultural entity to westernize rather than several distinct tribes to modernize.¹⁶

McCowan was well aware of how valuable traditional Native Americans were for public relations purposes, so he suggested placing "Old Indians" in the school as well. "Old Indians" were to be traditionally dressed and to work on stereotypical native crafts such as bead work and weaving. It seems that people wanted to see the "Old Indians" typecast into these roles. However, when it

¹⁶ Robert A. Trennert, Jr., "Selling Indian Education at World's Fairs and Expositions, 1893-1904," *American Indian Quarterly* 11, no. 3 (1987): 213.

came time to recruit Native Americans to perform traditional craft skills, problems arose. McCowan wanted to attract craftsmen from throughout the United States to participate in his exhibit, but when the Bureau of Indian Affairs surveyed reservation agents to seek qualified delegates, many agents sent back negative replies saying that they had succeeded in erasing Indian ways. As a result, planners had to rely on tribes that still had traditional craft skills, which turned out to be southwestern tribes. Therefore, traditional southwestern handicrafts dominated the display. Fairgoers were then led to believe that all Native Americans performed these crafts and dressed the way that the southwestern tribes did. Again, this suggested to visitors that there was a solitary Indian tribe that needed to be educated. This presentation proposed that the westernization of Native Americans would be an easy task.¹⁷

McCowan wanted to demonstrate old and new ways in contact with one another. As for the school building itself, one side of the passageway contained booths where the “Old Indians” showed off their handicrafts while on the other side were classrooms used for students to flaunt their educational talents. Placing these polar opposite Native Americans in one single building pushed the idea that the efforts of Indian educators were successful. The layout of the building showed the stages of primitive to progress, which followed the Fair’s themes of modernization and industrialization. One other way that McCowan worked to boost publicity was to bring famous Native Americans to the Fair. He was able to get a group of Apache prisoners from Fort Sill as well as the notorious Geronimo. Geronimo lived in the Indian village and spent time on the main floor of the school building where he would sign autographs as well as his bows and arrows. This was done in order to attract visitors, and it is not surprising that people used the Indian School as a source of entertainment.¹⁸

In an area in front of the school, W.J. McGee built and managed an Indian village containing hundreds of Native Americans.¹⁹ Some of the village residents practiced their respective trades in the schoolhouse. Others lived on the grounds and were demonstrating the “old Indian” ways of living and selling their goods to tourists. The Native Americans were provided with a food supply and the means to construct native dwellings. Members brought traditional clothing and headdresses as well as items such as totem poles.²⁰ They were encouraged to sell their goods to fairgoers and expected to make a great deal of money from the tourists.²¹

¹⁷ Trennert, “Selling Indian Education,” 213, 215.

¹⁸ Trennert, “Selling Indian Education,” 213, 215.

¹⁹ Trennert, “Selling Indian Education,” 214.

²⁰ Rademacher, *Still Shining! Discovering Lost Treasures from the 1904 St. Louis World’s Fair*, 115.

²¹ Trennert, “Selling Indian Education,” 214.

Traditional Indian exhibits dominated and took the limelight away from the model school. Guidebooks, tourists, and the press drew more attention to the large assortment of “Old Indians.” Fairgoers were out to see “Old Indians” of any type and had a difficult time drawing a line between commercial and official Native American displays. Since the West had been won for the United States, the idea of “Old Indian” traditions seized the public’s mind. McCowan did what he could to keep private Indian exhibitors away from the World’s Fair, but he failed. The Pike contained exhibits such as the infamous “Cliff Dwellers” presentation, which used approximately 150 “southwestern natives to perform dances and sell craft goods.” An “Indian Congress” was also shown. Described as a “great assembly of savages,” delegates of numerous tribes were employed to present sun dances, war dances, and snake dances. Americans were not interested in seeing the progress of the Native Americans; they were entranced by the “Old Indian” ways. Looking at these events through a post-colonial lens, it is apparent that people wanted compare to themselves to Native Americans. Fairgoers could see how their modern society was far superior to the primitive ways of the Indians. Also, McCowan’s intentions were completely looked over by visitors. They may have seen some distinctions between the new and old ways of the Native Americans, but McCowan did not help his cause by creating attractions, like Geronimo, to draw in fairgoers.²²

Another one of the groups which the Department of Anthropology wished to bring to the Louisiana Purchase Exposition was the Ainu from the northernmost Japanese island of Hokkaido. Like the Native Americans, the Ainu were chosen to exemplify a culture with a primitive agricultural system. The Indians, however, were a prime example of how Westernized education and exposure can transform the most primitive of people into members of the modernized world. The Ainu had developed specialized architecture suitable for a difficult climate, but it did not meet the standards of Americanized developments and progress. Fair organizers hoped to familiarize the world with “the full law and faith of a little-known primitive people.” The Ainu were an indigenous people noted for being hirsute and are referred to as the “Hairy Ainu” in early writings. The Ainu were considered a curiosity, and W.J. McGee would have wished to bring them to St. Louis to participate in one of his “out-of-doors” exhibits.²³

McGee asked an anthropology professor from the University of Chicago, Dr. Frederick Starr, to travel to Japan to find a voluntary group of eight or ten Ainu and secure their attendance. Ainu tribesmen were expected to live in

²² Trennert, “Selling Indian Education,” 216, 217.

²³ The discussion which follows on the Ainu is taken from Vanstone, “The Ainu Group,” 78, 86.

their familiar ways in a self-constructed habitat. When Starr arrived at the capital of Hokkaido, he received approval for the project from the governor of Hokkaido and sought the assistance of a missionary named Reverend John Batchelor. Batchelor resided in Hokkaido for over 60 years and was familiar with the Ainu. While visiting Batchelor's home, Starr saw his first Ainu: a young man named Yazo. Starr decided that Yazo and his wife, Shirake, should be the first members of the Ainu group to go to St. Louis. Yazo and Shirake were familiar with European ways, and Starr believed this would ease the adjustment period for those Ainu not as familiar with outsiders. Yazo and Shirake agreed to Starr's offer.

With Batchelor's assistance, Starr was able to "recruit" an Ainu man named Kutoroge as well as his wife and child, Shutrake and Kiko. Kutoroge felt helpless when Batchelor explained what Starr wanted, and he unenthusiastically answered that he would have to if Batchelor said so. Perhaps Kutoroge felt he was being dominated by Batchelor's western and religious ways. On the other hand, Batchelor had formed a relationship with the Ainu. Kutoroge probably felt obligated to comply with Batchelor's request, and then convinced another couple, Sangyea and Santukno, and their daughter, Kin, to come along for the journey. When the families left their homes, the villagers wept since it was expected that the departing Ainu were never to be seen again. The Ainu did not fully understand what their purpose was at the World's Fair. They were being sent to be missionaries in the United States to physically represent their culture to fairgoers. The Ainu group being sent and the villagers were far from enthusiastic about their departure; this suggests that the Ainu may have felt their culture was in jeopardy. The Ainu were going to be cut off from their society and were likely scared that they would not return to it.

As the Ainu party was making their final departure preparations, one of Batchelor's Ainu servants, Bete Goro, became eager to join the group. Though Starr originally thought Bete Goro to be too "Japanized," he realized that the enthusiastic man would be a great addition to the timid and depressed group. As a final detail, two small houses were bought to be dismantled, sent to St. Louis, and reconstructed to make one normal sized home. On April 6, the group arrived at the fairgrounds and used the model Indian school as housing until the materials to make their own home arrived. McGee was pleased with Starr's work and applauded him on his successful journey.

The Ainu group caught the public's attention since they were not well known, not even in their home country of Japan. They were the first of their people to come to America. Writers described the Ainu as "mysterious little Japanese primitives." Fairgoers noted their respectful manners and cleanliness, yet they were disappointed

that the Ainu were not wild cannibals or dog-eaters. Though more reserved than members of other cultures, they enjoyed visitors, both tourists and other people from the anthropology displays. The younger Ainu acquired portions of the English language. An interpreter allowed for the Ainu to converse with visitors. They also were the subjects of lectures and were patient when being questioned or observed by whites. Though they were not man-eaters or ferocious, the Ainu seemed to have been just as popular as the rest of the living displays. These accounts suggest that fairgoers and anthropologists alike were doing nothing less than comparing themselves to the Ainu. They were brought specifically to demonstrate a primal society. The use of translators to communicate between Americans and the Ainu insinuates that maybe there was some success in fairgoers obtaining an educational experience as intended by the Department of Anthropology. Rather than simply using the Ainu as a spectacle, visitors were able to converse with them.

The Fair's most popular and commonly visited attraction was the Philippines Reservation. Roughly 18.5 million fairgoers visited the 47-acre outdoor exhibit which presented nearly 1200 Filipinos.²⁴ The Philippine Reservation was used to validate the Philippines expenditure and ensuing American government and military actions which were taking place at the time.²⁵ The United States acquired the Philippines from Spain at the end of the Spanish-American War. The 1904 World's Fair would have been an ideal place to display to the American public exactly what had been acquired without having to make a trip to the Philippines. The stated purpose the Philippine Reservation was to offer a "scientific demonstration" of the Philippines' geography, resources, and people, but the emphasis ended up being placed on the indigenous peoples and artifacts. Their contemporary cultural endeavors and industrial accomplishments were not shown.²⁶ Showing such undertakings would make the Filipinos look less primitive and less in need of American presence there.

The Philippine Reservation was located out of the way, indicating a move back into the rough and uncivilized world.²⁷ There was not one specific group on display. Each Filipino ethnic group had their own village to exhibit its life and culture; some homes were placed upon stilts above water while others were made of thatched huts.²⁸ Different levels of sophistication were shown from the least civilized in the Igorot and Negritos, to the semi-civilized Bagabos and Moros, up to the cultured and refined Visayans. For visitors, the cultured people

²⁴ Beverly K. Grindstaff, "Creating Identity: Exhibiting the Philippines at the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition," *National Identities* 1, no. 3 (1999): 246.

²⁵ Grindstaff, "Creating Identity," 247.

²⁶ Grindstaff, "Creating Identity," 248.

²⁷ Grindstaff, "Creating Identity," 254.

²⁸ Margaret Johanson Witherspoon, *Remembering the St. Louis World's Fair* (St. Louis: Comfort Printing, 1973), 38.

were still seen as natives. The Negritos worked as the anchor of the Philippine Reservation. Their development was seen as the lowest in rank and served as a starting point to show the different levels of intelligence within the Philippines. It was also believed that they would eventually die out after the exposure to the demanding yet enlightened world.²⁹ Their culture would evaporate as it would no longer have any use in an industrial society.

Without a doubt, the Igorots were the most popular exhibit during the Fair. Though they were compared to animals, the Igorots were thought to be biologically capable of improvement, and therefore better suited the Fair's emphasis on education and the government sponsor's self-described movement on "bringing Filipinos to improve their condition."³⁰ They were considered a novelty due to their scantily clad residents, dancing, and religious ceremonies which included eating dog meat.³¹ These ceremonies were appropriated for public entertainment and monetary gain. The city of St. Louis gave them a supply of dogs at the fixed amount of 20 dogs per week. Still, this did not appear to be adequate, as they had also pushed locals to bring them dogs which they would in turn buy to fulfill their daily needs. Fairgoers were alarmed yet captivated and were able to view what they referred to as "Bow-Wow Feasts."³²

Once at the fair, Bontoc Igorots became the subjects of scientific experiments: they were photographed and measured and analyzed by anthropologists who placed them against other "native groups" in physical challenges to test their athletic ability.³³ The journey to St. Louis had been difficult, long and recruits grew ill; at least two died during the trip.³⁴ At the fair their daily lives and rituals were "taken out of context and placed before the over 18 million Fairgoers who attended the exhibit" in which the events "took on cartoonish, even grotesque, dimensions."³⁵ Many dogs in the area near the Igorot Village frequently went missing so the neighborhood was advised to watch out for their dogs. Locals became quite upset. The Igorot's "savagery" was noted first thing as World's Fair visitors were greeting the Igorot Village with a sign stating "Igorot Village: Head Hunters of the Philippines."³⁶ Still today, present day Dogtown, located by Forest Park in St. Louis, is attributed to the Igorots.³⁷

²⁹ Grindstaff, "Creating Identity," 254.

³⁰ Maxwell, *Colonial Photography and Exhibitions*, 255.

³¹ Pilapil, "Dogtown U.S.A.," 16.

³² Pilapil, "Dogtown U.S.A.," 18.

³³ Anne Maxwell, *Colonial Photography and Exhibitions: Representations of the 'Native' and the Making of European Identities* (New York: Leicester University Press, 1999), 85.

³⁴ Pilapil, "Dogtown U.S.A.," 16.

³⁵ Grindstaff, "Creating Identity," 259.

³⁶ Dorothy Daniels Dirk, *The World Came to St. Louis: A Visit to the 1904 World's Fair* (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1979), 65.

³⁷ Pilapil, "Dogtown U.S.A.," 15-16.

These events show how cultural framework determined how the Igorots were seen. Whether or not the Igorots did in fact steal dogs, this story was blown up to reiterate the point that the Igorots were inferior to enlightened Americans. They were savages needing Americans to save them from their less than human ways. Anthropologists did not help in creating an educational experience in regards to the Igorots. They exploited their culture and made sure to advertise the “Bow-Wow Feasts.” Anthropologists had to have known that such a ceremony would shock fairgoers, and there is no way that the average viewer would have been able to see the cultural context of the ritual.

Another group displayed by the Department of Anthropology was the Batwa Pygmies, which were considered the smallest known type of human. They were brought to the Fair by Reverend Samuel Phillips Verner.³⁸ The Pygmy display consisted of four Batwa Pygmies plus five representatives of other tribe from Central Africa. The Pygmy group was considered far from ideal since there were no women or children shown. The women and children proved to be too apprehensive to trust the idea of travel. The average height of the Pygmy men was four feet ten and one-eighth inches. They were energetic, agile, and slender. There were five distinct languages within the group. They lived in close proximity to monkeys and parrots, and fairgoers considered the Pygmies, much like the Igorots, intriguingly akin to those lower beings since the Pygmies behaved “erratically.” They were seen as impulsive and difficult to control. People looked down on the Pygmies since they built their houses without any plans and made fires in a vulgar way, even though the making of fire was seen as one of the most important of Pygmy achievements.³⁹

One of the Pygmies on display, Ota Benga, had been obtained from a village in which he was being held captive.⁴⁰ Promoted as a cannibal because he had confessed to eating human flesh, Ota Benga created quite a scene because of his filed teeth and intense eyes.⁴¹ Originating from the Badinga tribe of the Kasai Valley of Central Africa, Ota Benga stood four feet ten inches tall. Considered impulsive and difficult for Fair organizers, the Pygmies were captivated by their American surroundings and were given many gifts from passing strangers. Following the World’s Fair, Ota was moved to the Bronx Zoo where he was put on display in a cage alongside chimpanzees, monkeys, and gorillas as part of an exhibit of man’s “evolutionary ancestors.”⁴² He was then sent to an orphanage

³⁸ Mark Bennitt and Frank Parker Stockbridge, eds., *History of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition* (St. Louis, Missouri: Universal Exposition Publishing Company, 1904), 676.

³⁹ Bennitt, *History of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition*, 676.

⁴⁰ S.P. Verner to W.J. Mcgee, March 20, 1904, *Louisiana Purchase Exposition Company*, Missouri Historical Society. St. Louis, Missouri.

⁴¹ MHM, “1904 World’s Fair,” (accessed February 12, 2009).

⁴² MHM, “1904 World’s Fair,” (accessed February 12, 2009).

because he was so small.⁴³ Being a man around little children, Ota Benga was put into a very uncomfortable situation. It is believed that he committed suicide.⁴⁴

The final group brought in by the Department of Anthropology was the “Patagonian Giants.” Five adult men, one adult woman, and a ten-year-old girl of the Tehuelche tribe from southern Argentina made up the exhibit of “Patagonian Giants.”⁴⁵ They were called “Patagonian Giants” because of references in early American literature and because the men were notable for their large stature, robust frame, and physical strength. They were an ideal group to display to counteract the appearance of the Pygmies because their average height exceeded any other known people.⁴⁶ The “Patagonian Giants” also represented the continued existence of “semi-civilized savages”⁴⁷

A mission to bring back the “Giants” was led by Señor Vincente Cane.⁴⁸ The average height of the men was roughly six feet, while the women were an inch or two shorter. They were skilled horsemen and transported their own saddles to the Fair. Even with their unfamiliarity with American livestock, they frequently competed admirably in roping and riding contests with American cowboys. Their characteristic weapon was the bolas, three stone balls joined together by leathern thongs.⁴⁹ Fairgoers enjoyed watching the Tehuelche Indians throw the bolas but were indifferent about what the Indians themselves valued such as decorated robes and pelts.⁵⁰ Visitors were amused by the Tehuelche athletic abilities, but they failed to learn what was important to the Tehuelche Indians. The shock value of the Tehuelche Indians was much less than that of the Igorots or the Batwa Pygmies. The “Patagonian Giants” simply were not as popular, which suggests that fairgoers were looking for entertainment and picked which living displays they wanted to “learn” about based on the amount of amusement they could experience in a given display.

Perhaps visitors would have been more absorbed with the “Giants” had the Tehuelche been able to carry out their traditional horse feast, where a mature gray mare is butchered and consumed. Then, the bones, teeth, skin, and other parts of the horse’s body are elaborately sanctified. The Department of Anthropology was disappointed that conditions did not allow for this to take

⁴³ *The World’s Greatest Fair*, DVD, St. Louis, PBS Home Video, 2004.

⁴⁴ *The World’s Greatest Fair*.

⁴⁵ Bennett, *History of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition*, 676.

⁴⁶ McGee, “Anthropology,” 4.

⁴⁷ David R. Francis, *The Universal Exposition of 1904*, vol. 1 (St. Louis: Louisiana Purchase Exposition Company, 1913), 522.

⁴⁸ Bennett, *History of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition*, 676.

⁴⁹ Bennett, *History of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition*, 677.

⁵⁰ W.J. McGee, *Report of the Department of Anthropology, 1905; LPE Company Collection*, MHM Archives, 100.

place.⁵¹ This ceremony likely did not define what it meant to be Tehuelche, so it is interesting to note that the Department of Anthropology would have wanted to show this. Even though fairgoers did not learn much about the values of Tehuelche Indians, they would have learned far less had there been a horse feast.

All things considered, the Department of Anthropology was able to present a variety of cultures from around the world to millions of people in one location. W.J. McGee's "out-of-door" exhibits did their best to show cultures in their context. However, these displays were placed in an ethnocentric setting and were seen as curiosities rather than opportunities for learning. Whether they meant to or not, the Fair and the press exploited the unique personality of each group for the sake of entertainment. In turn, fairgoers went to these displays and would tell others about what "bizarre" and "outlandish" activities they saw. A native of St. Louis, Edmund Philibert, wrote on August 14, 1904 "... We went to the Indian reservation, where we saw Chief Geronimo styled The Human tiger, for ten cents he would print his name with a pencil on a slip of paper. Saw the Pygmies who appeared to be naked with the exception of a gunny sack tied around the waist."⁵² Philibert also made an observation about the Ainu, stating "... they were not as dirty nor nearly as lazy looking as the Patagonians."⁵³ Sam P. Hyde took his own snapshots at the Fair. One was of a Native American: "... I spied this old savage in all his glory of bead and feather striding along with the step of a king. 'There's my game' said I 'I'll shoot him if I lose my scalp for it.'"⁵⁴

Obviously, these educational villages had turned into living exhibits where human beings had become the objects. The Department of Anthropology's goal of creating an educational experience was overshadowed by the fact that fairgoers were using these people to compare themselves to and to be entertained. Visitors cannot be blamed completely for this, since it is apparent that the anthropologists had picked to show certain people and ceremonies that would draw attendance. The Igorots probably had other religious ceremonies that they could have demonstrated, but the "Bow-Wow Feasts" were much more entertaining for fairgoers to see. Native Americans, like Geronimo, were shown to draw in the public. Generally speaking, the Ainu had never been heard of before, and people were apt to go and see something they never knew existed. The Pygmies were intriguing because of their height and their alleged cannibalism. The "Patagonian Giants" were probably used to foil the stature of

⁵¹ McGee, *Report of the Department of Anthropology*, MHM Archives 100.

⁵² Martha R. Clevenger, ed. "*Indescribably Grand: Diaries and Letters from the 1904 World's Fair* (St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 1996), 83.

⁵³ Clevenger, ed., "*Indescribably Grand*, 110.

⁵⁴ Clevenger, ed., "*Indescribably Grand*, 132.

the Pygmies, and their athletic abilities were enjoyable to observe. The Department of Anthropology could have portrayed these groups differently by elaborating on each culture. Rather, they decided to take advantage of each society's peculiar customs.

Presently at the Missouri History Museum, the exhibit "1904 World's Fair: Looking Back at Looking Forward" makes clear that non-Western people participated in the living displays for a variety of reasons: to visit, to work, or to be displayed. Museum educators note on a webpage illustrated aid of the exhibit, "The variety of groups created an extensive global village where people's appearances defined their place within a presumed hierarchy of civilization and justified American and European empire building." The idea of "living displays" is presented as both the chance for fairgoers to have personal encounters with people from societies from around the world as well as a way to reaffirm the central belief in the core idea of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition; industrial dominance.⁵⁵

The exhibit uses photographs to show the people who were displayed at the Fair. Emme and Mamie Gerhard operated a successful portrait studio at the turn of the century in St. Louis. During the Fair, they photographed individuals and families living and performing both in the Anthropology Department exhibits and along the Pike. The photographs are beautiful and enchanting. They were taken exclusively in their studio using natural light to accentuate the facial expressions of each subject. This was probably done to show each person's uniqueness and how different they were than Americans. The Gerhard Sisters' photographs are unique documents in regards to those people from distant lands that lived in St. Louis during the Fair. Shown at the Museum are eight photographs including Geronimo, a Patagonian Giant, a Bontac Igorot Head Hunter, and a Bagobo Chief. Geronimo was likely acknowledged by his name because he had become famous in the United States prior to the Fair. All of the other photograph subjects were not identified by name. These people are not shown in their Fair displays and the photographs make each person look appealing and attractive in their own way. The caption for the Igorot reads: "The organizers of the Philippine Reservation publicized the Bontoc as the most 'primitive' and warlike of the Igorot peoples due in part to their head-hunting rituals. Presumably they tattooed their chest for every head they took." The photo gives a romanticized and artistic impression of the Igorot. There are few photographs displayed that were taken at the anthropology exhibits, and the ones that are shown depict families and nothing grotesque.

⁵⁵ MHM, "1904 World's Fair," (accessed February 12, 2009).

The Missouri History Museum website allows people to click on a photograph of the Philippine Reservation and read about how in order “to gain public support for America’s foreign policy, the exhibit was designed to introduce Americans to the country’s newest protectorate” and was used to promote the Philippines’ existing natural resources. In the exhibit, “Looking Back at Looking Forward” suggests that the Philippine peoples brought to St. Louis were planned to represent a survey of the islands’ population, but also to demonstrate the “stages of humankind,” from the most primitive to the most Westernized. One artifact, an advertisement and pamphlet about the Philippine display, allows visitors to see firsthand how the indigenous people were portrayed, and how the educational value in such an exhibit could be lost by using it for the purposes of entertainment. The museum display needs to have more background information to set up the proper framework for the original purpose of the Philippine Reservation as well as to explain how this learning was distorted. Unfortunately, aesthetic concerns regarding word count limits and text panel placements can limit the amount of historical context or intellectual interpretation that can be presented in an exhibit.⁵⁶

One of the most shocking aspects of the Museum is that there is no information about the Igorots. As previously mentioned, the Igorots were extremely popular at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition. The display attracted millions of people, particularly because of their practice of eating dogs. It is shocking that an exhibit about the 1904 World’s Fair would look over the most visited display of the exposition. Perhaps this is because even when given the entire story and told the cultural context, modern day people would still be unable to grasp the idea of a dog-eating society. Perhaps curators are protecting those who were exhibited from being judged in the same way they were in 1904.

Aside from the Gerhard photograph and the label underneath it, the “Patagonian Giants” are overlooked. It is possible that they are excluded from the display for the opposite reason as the Igorots. Aside from being tall and robust, the Tehuelche Indians did not display any practices at the Fair that were overly alarming to visitors. Even the website overlooks this group. Curators may have felt that there was no need to elaborate on the Tehuelche Indians since they were not all that popular. Lack of artifacts may have also been an issue. Present day visitors like to see objects, and if there were not Tehuelche items to support a text panel, curators may have seen no point in addressing this group. By not acknowledging the “Patagonian Giants,” this may also suggest that curators felt there were more important issues at hand.

⁵⁶ MHM, “1904 World’s Fair.”

Rather than discussing the Igorots in the museum, there is a text panel discussing the Bagobo Moros. During the World's Fair, The twenty-three men and seven women, who lived in a village of huts on the reservation, originated from the western coast of the island of Mindanao in the Philippines. Considered skilled hunters and farmers, the Bagobos were also known for their bead work. Expressed as the friendliest of the Filipinos, the Bagobos did not fit the image of "primitive" people. Visitors in 1904 found them attractive, chatty, and quaintly attired in colorful pants, skirts, and jackets adorned with handmade decorative beading. Conceivably, this text panel in the museum is reiterating a romanticized model of a friendly savage and works to make the Philippine Reservation sound like a charming place to visit and talk with natives.

The Missouri History Museum also fails to mention the Pygmies. Considering what happened to Ota Benga, telling the story of how the Pygmies were viewed and treated in St. Louis in 1904 would be quite embarrassing. However, people can go to the online exhibit and view a photograph of Ota Benga taken by the Gerhard sisters. He appears to be smiling, complete with filed teeth and a spear. The online exhibit appears to be geared towards a more educated and research-oriented audience. It is possible that this was done deliberately if the curators of the museum exhibit thought the general public would not be able to understand or appreciate the presence of the Pygmies and Ota Benga. Once again, the museum exhibit appears to be protecting those who were exploited during the Fair.

The Ainu and the American Indians portions of the exhibit give a brief and accurate portrayal of their 1904 displays. However, the information presented could easily mislead visitors to mistake the groups for those featured along the Pike. There is one small caption below a picture of a Geisha girl beside the case that mentions the Pike as an amusement and that those on the Pike were there to entertain and make money. The captions of the Ainu and Native Americans allude to the fact that these groups practiced their handicrafts and sold them to fairgoers for a profit. Close to this case is one containing artifacts from the Esquimaux Village, which was strictly a Pike amusement. The exhibit appears to lump all Native tribes together as sources of amusement and fails to distinguish which group was part of the Department of Anthropology or the Pike. The website gives a much clearer definition of the Pike and its purpose of entertainment. While both exhibits at the 1904 World's Fair had different objectives, fairgoers saw both of them as sources of entertainment and as a way to define themselves as Americans.

The "Looking Back at Looking Forward" curators designed the show into themes relating to people who visited the Fair, people who worked at the Fair, and people who were at the Fair. Those displayed by the Department of Anthropology and those present along the Pike fell into the category of people at the Fair. There simply would not have been enough room in the exhibition hall at the museum to

create two separate displays within “Looking Back at Looking Forward”. Visitors would likely be able to grasp the concept of the difference between the two displays if there was enough time and space to explain the premises and contexts of each aspect of the living displays and the Pike. By combining both sets of displayed groups, the case reinforces that people were indeed exhibited in one way or another at the Fair. Though “Looking Back at Looking Forward” gives an edited and polished version of the living displays from 1904, it does acknowledge the fact that several ethnic groups were there neither as conventional workers nor as tourists.

It is evident that today’s visitors will have nearly as much of a challenge as those in 1904 in differentiating between education and leisure. W.J. McGee clearly stated his goals for the Department of Anthropology, but in a post-structural fashion, it was up to fairgoers to make up their own minds about how they wanted to view the native groups. There is no question about the fact that people attending the Fair saw these exhibits, passed judgment, and compared themselves to the people who were displayed. It is not surprising that fair-goers established an identity compared to the groups on display. The whole point of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition was to demonstrate the “progress” of white civilization. McGee’s “out-of-door” displays reinforced the American visitors apparent bias by placing people who were in their own cultural context into an American framework. People passing by enjoyed purchasing souvenirs from these groups, which shows that tourists were indeed interested but not necessarily ready to be open-minded about non-“white” cultures. “Looking Back at Look Forward” suggests that “these ethnic souvenirs insisted that within the confines of the fairgrounds, the products of a culture could reflect and help define the identity of that culture, whether ‘civilized’ or ‘primitive.’”⁵⁷ It helped Americans redefine themselves as the supreme race and culture.

The Missouri History Museum’s website gives a fairly accurate portrayal of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition. The curators of the website need to continue adding information in a similar fashion. It offers an accurate yet quick overview of the Fair. These photographs and pieces of information allow for viewers to come to their own conclusions about the Fair, and it encourages people to make their own interpretations and further their own research about the Louisiana Purchase Exposition. In the case of the Museum itself, the display regarding cultures at the Fair needs to be reorganized in order to present an all encompassing story of the Department of Anthropology as well as present the idea “education versus entertainment” to the viewer.

The Missouri History Museum falls short of telling the whole story and is more apt to misinform visitors about exactly what happened in the Department of

⁵⁷ MHM, “1904 World’s Fair.”

Anthropology. The museum exhibit suppresses information that might offend some viewers. Artifacts on display include both authentic objects of daily use and imitations created as souvenirs. However, without prior research, an average visitor will be quick to mistake the Anthropology Displays for those shows along the Pike. Museum visitors are making their own interpretations from what the Missouri History Museum's understanding of the Department of Anthropology displays were in the first place.

A present day viewer may still use 19th century sensibilities when viewing photographs and objects. Do we, as present day visitors to the museum not make pass our own judgments on the people who were displayed at the Fair? Do professional historians judge curators who must work within limitations that historians do not face? Do we look at the photographs of the people in attendance wearing their native dress and living in their huts and use them to identify what we are not? How do we look at photographs from the "Bow-Wow Feasts" now? Would a museum label or text panel explaining the religious significance of such a ceremony influence how we perceive such events? For some people, text panels putting the events into cultural context would make the viewer appreciate what they were seeing. For others, it would not matter. For historians, bias and interpretation would be an issue.

However, using a post-structural lens, museum visitors are construing their own meanings of the events of 1904 according to what the museum and online exhibit creators have put together. They are receiving only a portion of what W.J. McGee had intended. McGee had intended to show the development of man from the primitive to the enlightened. This message is portrayed throughout the museum and online exhibits. Because the museum is concealing some of the groups and event of the Department of Anthropology, new interpretations are being made by present day viewers. The understanding of original fairgoers did not parallel that of McGee's goals. The museum and website do not present the full story of McGee and the Department of Anthropology and give their own interpretation of what happened at the 1904 World's Fair. Therefore, present day museum and website visitors have no other option than to make their assumptions about the 1904 Department of Anthropology based on what the curators have decided to present. It is the responsibility of the Missouri History Museum's website and the Missouri History Museum to draw in viewers and properly educate them on the goals of the Department of Anthropology and what the results were. The rest of the accountability is left to the viewer.

The Role and Function of Literature in Revolutionary China

By Scott Ersland

Literature has always been a central part of any revolutionary society. It has served many roles and purposes from propaganda to criticism. Literature has been responsible for spreading revolutionary ideas and promoting calls for social, economic, political, and intellectual changes. In the American Revolution, the pamphlet *Common Sense*, served as a rallying cry for the American colonials. However in China, literature has played an ambiguous role in revolution. It has been used as a call for change, but it has also been used as a way to promote unity and loyalty to an oppressive system. The role and function of literature evolved during the Communist Chinese Party's history. At first the CCP (CCP) used literature as a way to attack the traditions of Confucian society, but after coming to power the CCP tried hard to suppress any literature that could be interpreted as critical to the State and the Party. While initially literature served as a voice of concern, it eventually led to outright calls for revolution and became a danger to those in authority.

The books *The Family* and *Wild Swans* offer two different portrayals of literature in China's revolutionary society. *The Family*, written after the May Fourth Movement, illustrates the importance of literature in the student movement. It depicts literature as a way to call for reform by spreading the criticisms and objections of those calling for change. *Wild Swans* takes place from the onset of the Chinese Civil War to the middle of Communist power. *Wild Swans* shows that once revolution had been achieved, it was dangerous to spread new ideas, reforms, and criticism of the new government. The CCC clamped down on the intellectuals as counterrevolutionaries. The CCC provided its own literature including the famous *Little Red Book*, a work that encompassed Mao Zedong's political ideas. This book would serve as not only the key tool of propaganda for the CCC, but also as a test of loyalty to the Party. All true communists would own a copy of the book. Literature was no longer meant to spread reform, but it was used as propaganda to promote the State and the Party. Both books prove how literature can be dangerous toward authority and spread the ideas and thoughts of revolution rapidly and over great distances.

A question that needs to be explored is when did literature come to the forefront of arguing for change and reform in China? The incident that appears to stick out the most is the May Fourth Movement, which emerged around 1916 after the failure of the 1911 Revolution and lasted through the 1920s. The after

effects of the movement can be seen in *The Family*. The brothers in the book become avid readers of the progressive newspapers and magazines that called for change and reform. Magazines such as *The New Youth* and *The Weekly Review*, aroused the boys' senses of patriotism and justice. Author Pa Chin describes the effect the works had on the boys, "Their words were like sparks, setting off a conflagration in the brothers' hearts."¹ The brothers, especially the youngest one, would eventually get involved in the protests and progressive literature. Starting their own student paper, Cheuh-hui became a vocal advocate for progress, equality, modernization, change, and reform. Literature at this time was used to expose the horrors, inequalities, injustices, corruption, and backwardness of society and government. Most historians agree that the themes found in the *Family* of "arranged marriage, superstition, modern non-Confucian education, the emancipation of women, the moral bankruptcy of the old order," were very common in most of the Chinese literature of that time.² These themes spoke to the larger issues of Chinese society during this revolutionary period.

One of the main elements of the May Fourth literature was its emphasis on realism. This replaced the "pedantic, obscure, and ornamental literature of the traditional elite," that had been so common prior to the May Fourth Movement.³ By focusing on the lives of peasants and the average person, literature became an instrument of public opinion. Authors focused on a "simple, expressive literature of the people and a plain-speaking and popular literature of society."⁴ Literature was no longer reserved to the intellectual elite, but should be a voice of the masses that spoke to the people. Literature also became a place where the concerns and problems of the average person could be expressed for all to see. It began to serve the role as the public voice crying out against injustice, corruption, and society's problems. The communists would take advantage of this new realist literature by using it in the Soviet Marxist concept of "reflectionism." The CCC used reflectionism "as a reflecting mirror at the same time as the act of writing was assigned the function of active critique of societal evils." The mass audience became the significant purpose of a novel over the "creative intention of the author."⁵ Authors wanted their readers to share experiences with the character and emphasize with his or her plight.

¹ Pa Chin, *The Family* (Honolulu: University Press of the Pacific, 2001), 32. The novel is volume one of a trilogy written between 1933-1940. The first English translation appeared in 1958 by Sidney Shapiro for the Foreign Languages Press in Peking.

² Milena Doleželová-Velingerová, *A Selective Guide to Chinese Literature 1900-1949: The Novel* (Leiden, Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1988), 63.

³ Corrine Dale, *Chinese Aesthetics and Literature* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), 154.

⁴ Dale, *Chinese Aesthetics and Literature*, 154.

⁵ Dale, *Chinese Aesthetics and Literature*, 158.

The role and function of literature was as much a product of politics as it was of intellect. Sometimes literature can even be used to bring two sides together against a common enemy. During the Second United Front between the Guomindang and the CCP, the scholars and authors on both sides agreed to their own truce. The focus of the intellectuals had to be on the Japanese invaders. Literary groups of both sides of the political spectrum agreed that “the most urgent duty of the day was to oppose Japan and for that reason everybody should work together despite party differences.”⁶ Leftists and Rightists, Nationalists and Communists, Traditionalists and Liberals all began to work together against the Japanese. They united in the beliefs of national defense and the importance of free speech. Instead of their differences, the intellectuals looked at their commonalities. The slogan of this united front of literary societies was “the National Defense Literature and the Mass Literature of the National Revolutionary Struggle.” The writers proclaimed, “On the side of literature, we must advocate independent development and freedom of creative writing for each party and each man.”⁷ However, this united front of intellectuals would be as cohesive as the Second United Front between the CCP and GMD. It appeared that literature was not strong enough to keep the two sides together, and conflict would continue to brew with literature serving as weapons for both sides.

The question that remains to be answered is why did the role of literature transform from an instrument of revolution to an instrument of the state? By examining some of the literature of the time and the response of the CCC, it becomes clear that the CCP was almost always opposed to any type of literature that criticized any aspect of Communism. The Communists were more than willing to support and spread any literature that criticized the Guomindang, but cracked down on literature critical of the CCC as counterrevolutionary. There could be no dissent in the CCC. As early as the War of Resistance to Japan, the CCC launched a rectification campaign against the intellectuals. In his essay “On New Democracy” in 1940, Mao commended those who had spread the ideas of reform and criticism through literature, but argued there was no longer any need for the critical essay.⁸

He changed his mind in 1956, when the CCC launched the Hundred Flowers campaign. The Hundred Flowers campaign was intended to appeal to the intellectual class. The campaign was named in honor of the phrase “Let a

⁶ Amitendranath Tagore, *Literary Debates in Modern China 1918-1937* (Tokyo: The Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies, 1967), 210.

⁷ Tagore, *Literary Debates in Modern China 1918-1937*, 210.

⁸ Charles Alber, *Enduring the Revolution: Ding Ling and the Politics of Literature in Guomindang China* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2002), x.

hundred flowers bloom together, let the hundred schools of thought contend.”⁹ Mao and the CCC wanted the intellectuals to voice any constructive criticism they had in the running or direction of the country. Mao believed that the intellectuals’ views would lead to general improvements of the country, but at the same time they would still remain completely loyal to the CCC. John King Fairbank explains in his book, *The Great Chinese Revolution 1800-1985*, that the intellectuals “began to criticize the CCC regime in rapidly escalating terms—its basic premises, working style, doctrines, and practices suddenly came under attack—so severe that within five weeks the Hundred Flowers campaign had to be closed down.”¹⁰ This intellectual literature appeared to be very similar to the literature that had attacked the Guomindang and the old regimes before it. The CCC quickly cracked down on these intellectuals and made them the objects of their attacks. The Hundred Flowers campaign which had called for constructive criticism, eventually led to an attack on intellectuals during the following Anti-Rightist campaign. The CCC wanted to avoid the similar fate of the Guomindang regime that this form of literature had helped bring down.

To fully understand how crucial and devastating literature can be in a revolutionary society, an examination of the effect literature had on the Guomindang regime would be beneficial. Charles Alber’s *Enduring the Revolution: Ding Ling and the Politics of Literature in Guomindang China* is a thoughtful account of how literature played such a significant role in the downfall of the Guomindang government by focusing on the famous female Chinese author Ding Ling. The Communists took full advantage of the power of literature as propaganda in their attacks against the Guomindang. An examination of Ding Ling’s life is a prime case study of how the CCC took advantage of literature against the Guomindang, but stifled it when they came to power. Early on in her life, Ling rebelled against the traditional views of her family and village. She refused to marry her cousin, whom her parents had chosen for her husband. Shortly after leaving her family she married a Communist advocate, but the Guomindang executed him early in their marriage. After his execution, she wrote the short story *Miss Sophie’s Diary*, for which she became well known.¹¹

The short story features a passive young woman dealing with unhappiness and uncertainty due to confusing sexual feelings and romantic relationships. Sophie is depicted as a pathetic, trapped girl emotionally damaged by her traditional Confucian society. The story shocked many of Ling’s readers with its semifeudal attitudes. The Communists took advantage of the shock and used it

⁹ John Fairbank, *The Great Chinese Revolution 1800-1985* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1986), 292.

¹⁰ Fairbank, *The Great Chinese Revolution 1800-1985*, 292.

¹¹ Alber, *Enduring the Revolution*, 55-65.

as a criticism against the traditional social values of China. Soon after Ding Ling joined the CCC in 1932, the Guomindang placed her under house arrest for three years. Mao and the CCC commended Ding Ling's works at the time, but as the CCP came to power their views quickly shifted. While the Guomindang was known for censoring the press, proletariat literature became much more accepted during the Nationalist Government reign thanks to the unpopularity and corruption of the Guomindang. When asked if there was any proletariat literature in China, Ding Ling commented, "That formerly many had opposed it, but no longer. Though not themselves proletarian, leftist writers had written many stories about peasants and workers."¹² Literature was beginning to call for social reform that was being encapsulated in the CCC ideology and politics. Ling's *Miss Sophie's Diary* represents just one example of how literature could show the unhappiness and oppression of the masses in a traditional China.

Ding Ling was a classic example of how the CCC used literature to expose the problems and concerns of the Nationalist government, and arguably Ling suffered more under the CCP reign than under the Nationalist reign. Under the CCP reign, Ling was known for her continuing political activism and ever changing politics about the State and the Party. In the Anti-Rightist Campaign, when the CCC cracked down on "recalcitrant intellectuals", Ling was denounced as a "rightist."¹³ Similar to the Guomindang press censorship, the CCC banned her novels, essays, stories, and other works. Ding Ling continued to suffer oppression at the hands of the CCC during the Cultural Revolution. After spending five years in jail, she was sent into the countryside to perform manual labor for twelve years. This thought reform finally led her to rehabilitation in 1978.¹⁴

Wild Swans offers an amazing account of Mao Zedong Thought and how his literature was used in the midst of the Cultural Revolution as propaganda in Communist China to influence classrooms and education. The author of the book, Jung Chang, recounts her education as a student during the Cultural Revolution, "The old textbooks had all been condemned as 'bourgeois poison,' and nobody was brave enough to write new ones. So we sat in classes reciting Mao's articles and reading People's Daily editorials. We sang songs of Mao's quotations, or gathered to dance 'loyalty dances,' gyrating and waving our Little Red Books."¹⁵ All literature had to be approved by the CCC and that would only happen if the book would promote the State, the Party, or Mao. Any old literature was considered dangerous and bourgeois, similar to

¹² Alber, *Enduring the Revolution: Ding Ling and the Politics of Literature in Guomindang China*, 116.

¹³ Fairbank, *The Great Chinese Revolution 1800-1985*, 292.

¹⁴ Yi-Tsi Mei Feuerwerker, "In Quest of the Writer Ding Ling," *Feminist Studies* 10 (1984), 65.

¹⁵ Jung Chang, *Wild Swans* (New York: Anchor Books, 1991), 377.

the old textbooks, and the CCC cracked down hard on them. It appeared that they wanted to avoid how the eroding and disillusioning effect literature had negatively impacted the Guomindang.

Ding Ling's life can be seen in both *The Family* and *Wild Swans*. Her early life shows the same unhappiness and dissatisfaction with the traditional society that Chueh-hin and the other characters of the *Family* were experiencing. Women were being encouraged to fulfill their traditional domestic roles and subservience to men. Ding Ling suffered from this at first, but she rejected the traditional roles and became an educated intellectual. She was able to expose this oppression in her writings and was an example of how literature serves to voice concern and criticism against the established order. Pa Chin's purpose for his book, *The Family*, is very similar to much of Ling's writings. Chin wanted to illustrate "the necessity of breaking away from the oppression of the traditional family structure."¹⁶

It is interesting to compare the life of Ling to Chin and see the similar experiences and hardships that the authors both went through. Chin was praised for his criticism and exposure of traditional society, but eventually he would be jailed as well for not being revolutionary enough. It was not that the CCC did not agree with and support Chin's criticisms, but they felt he did not take his criticisms far enough to the next level of supporting the CCC. The problem facing authors during the Cultural Revolution was that literature was in the throes of "Maoist excesses of revolutionary romanticism."¹⁷

After examining how the CCC cracked down on critical and "bourgeois" literature, the question is what kind of literature was accepted and even promoted by the CCC during the Cultural Revolution? According to Leo Ou-fan Lee in his essay, "Reflections on Change and Continuity in Modern Chinese Fiction," the literature of the Cultural Revolution can be characterized as "mass-style revolutionary romanticism." This revolutionary romanticism was "the renewed sense of social order, the return of didacticism, the formula writing, the popular desire to entertain, and the appearance of the positive hero as either peasant or cadre."¹⁸ Contrary to the May Fourth and Guomindang literature where the peasant is usually depicted as oppressed and miserable, the literature of the Cultural Revolution emphasized the peasants and CCC officials as heroes of the people fighting against the rightists and bourgeois in class struggle. The obvious goal of this type of revolutionary romantic propaganda is to glorify the CCC and its accomplishments.

¹⁶ Doleželová-Velingerová, *A Selective Guide to Chinese Literature 1900-1949: The Novel*, 62.

¹⁷ Dale, *Chinese Aesthetics and Literature*, 154.

¹⁸ Dale, *Chinese Aesthetics and Literature*, 161.

A closer examination of CCC literature illustrates the emphasis of hero-worship and class struggle. The class struggles are always depicted as good versus evil, peasants versus landlords, proletariat versus bourgeois. The victorious outcome was usually obvious to the reader from the onset. The same types of characters are usually prevalent as the two sides oppose each other. According to T.A. Hsia, the reader “knows what characters he is going to encounter: the familiar ugly face of a landlord, the aspiring workers, peasants, and intellectuals who unite to follow the leadership of the Communist Part, and the waverers who somehow have to make a choice between the good and evil-shadows of the types which, he remembers, dominated the proletarian literature of the 1930s.”¹⁹ Hsia goes on to explain that this type of literature is boring and an insult to any person with half a brain. It is dull, predictable, and deceiving, but this is was the only type of literature that was allowed during the heart of the Cultural Revolution.²⁰

Ironically, this contradicts the method the CCC used to come to power. Interestingly, the CCC found literature absolutely critical to their Party, but dangerous at the same time. Literature used to call for change and to expose the problems of society, had been replaced by propaganda meant to praise the State and the Party. This can be seen throughout *Wild Swans*, as Jung Chang describes what life was like during the Cultural Revolution. Teachers were afraid to teach, students learned only what the CCC approved, and intellectuals were imprisoned and put through thought reform. Any literature that was not proletariat in nature was harshly suppressed by the CCC regime. The Cultural Revolution was similar to the earlier Anti-Rightist campaign, but more severe and far reaching. It dealt a blow to intellectual literature and promoted the dull, predictable, and deceiving literature that Hsia earlier alluded to in an article on hero-worship during the Cultural Revolution. Literature was no longer an art form, but a propaganda tool to be exploited by the CCC.

Once the CCC came to power, they understood the importance of literature as an instrument of political control. According to Howard Boorman in his piece, *The Literary World of Mao Tse-Tung*, the CCC considered the function of literature as a tool of social stimulus and, as stated above, political control. To utilize this function, the CCC used all the forms of literature (fiction, drama, verse, essays) to educate the public, arouse support for the Party, and to spread revolutionary ideals and policies. The CCC wanted literature to accomplish “social realism,” which according to Boorman meant not only depicting “life as it really is,” but more importantly “life as it ought to be.”²¹ This would tie into

¹⁹ Cyril Birch, *Chinese Communist Literature* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1963), 113.

²⁰ Birch, *Chinese Communist Literature*, 114.

²¹ Howard Boorman, “The Literary World of Mao Tse-tung,” *The China Quarterly* 13(1963), 18.

the other Soviet Marxist ideal of reflectionism. By reflecting on the evils of society, the author would be utilizing social realism. In essence by portraying the evils of society, the author would be describing life how it is. Once that was established, the author would move on to how life should and would be under the CCC. This idea of social realism was very important in the CCC attacks against the Nationalist government.

The role and function of literature evolved between the time periods covered in *The Family and Wild Swans*, 1930s-1980s. Initially, literature was used as a way to expose the problems of traditional society and to push for various reforms. *The Family* provides plenty of examples of how the younger generation of Chinese student popularized magazines and works after the May Fourth Movement. As the Guomindang took power in China, the CCC recognized the power of literature in shaping public opinion and put it to good use in promoting their ideology. Literature began to attack the Nationalist government for its corruption, inefficiency, and weaknesses. The Guomindang tried to use press censure to suppress this type of critical literature, but proletariat literature gained a foothold at the time. The CCP used literature to attack their opponents and to promote their Marxism, helping them gain the support of leftist intellectuals. Once the CCC came to power, the role of literature evolved in revolutionary China. Similar to the Guomindang, the CCP suppressed any literature they considered “bourgeois” or “counterrevolutionary,” or essentially any literature critical of the policies and practices of the CCP. Eventually, the CCP turned its attacks against the intellectuals in the Anti-Rightist campaign and the Cultural Revolution, evidenced by the account in *Wild Swans* of how the Cultural Revolution transformed literature into propaganda glorifying the CCP and Mao. Literature took on many contradictory roles and functions during the period of revolution, including its use by the CCP to promote the Party. Whether ambiguous or starkly defined, the place of literature in the revolutionary society of China remains prominent.

Women Warriors: The League of Women Voters and the Fight for Equality

By Jenna Kowalczyk

THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT

Section 1. Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.

Section 2. The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

Section 3. This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification.¹

In 1973 the League of Women Voters (LWV) was a major player in the fight to get the amendment passed. The LWV had difficulty passing the ERA; the state of Illinois had a much harder time than other areas, as there was much opposition to it and the bill was defeated multiple times in Congress and the House of Representatives. This paper outlines the struggles the League faced in its efforts to secure an equal rights amendment. I address several questions of the national, state, and local activism through the focus on McLean County in Central Illinois. What was the national LWV campaign policy? How did the League gain interest with the public? Why did the ERA not get passed in Illinois? How did the League try and establish the framework to pass the ERA? What did the League do when the ERA was denied? What role did the McLean County LWV play in the larger picture of the ERA ratification process? Locally, how much influence did the League have on public opinion? One issue that proved especially important to the League's efforts was their need to continually raise funds.

The LWV began a national campaign to ratify the ERA in 1973. It had proved to be an exciting year for women in their fight to gain rights in a way that did not require ratification. The legal battle of *Roe v. Wade* confirmed women's right to privacy in the wake of an abortion and women's rights advocates believed that with women gaining these new rights it was an important stepping stone to get the ERA ratified.² Women began to feel if they took the time to fight to getting the ERA passed they could gain the rights that it promised. League President, Lucy Wilson Benson, had established two major parts to their campaign: lobbying state legislators, as well as, public education and the League began selling bracelets to earn money to finance the ERA campaign.³

¹ Roberta W. Francis, *The History Behind the Equal Rights Amendment*. <<http://www.equalrightsamendment.org/era.htm>> (25 November 2007).

² Elisabeth Israels Perry, *Women in Action: Rebels and Reformers, 1920-1980* (Washington D.C.: League of Women Voters Education Fund, 1995), 26.

³ League of Women Voters Education Fund, *Changed Forever: The League of Women Voters and the Equal Rights Amendment* (Washington D.C.: League of Women Voters Education Fund, 1988), 10.

By 1974 thirty states had ratified the ERA, which meant that only needed eight more were needed before the deadline set for March of 1979. A new position had also been opened within the LWV to help gain more support for the ERA. They hired Mary Brooks as the ERA staff director. Her position was the only one of its kind which allowed her to become the top expert on the ERA at the time. Brooks thought that it was not a good sign and knew the ERA was in trouble. How could no other organization have made a position equal to hers? However, despite the daunting mission in front of her she took charge and created the ERA Technical Task Force which was established within a coalition called the Equal Rights Amendment Ratification Council, which consisted of 50 other pro-ERA organizations. The force was used to assist states that needed help getting the ERA ratified. Throughout 1974 three more states ratified the ERA, leaving only five more states to go.⁴

Scholarship on second wave feminism has shown how organizations played a vital role in the emancipation of women's and minority rights in the post-World War II era. The image of women as "Stepford Wives", who only hand out pamphlets, is discredited throughout much of the research on women's activism during the 20th century. Also, literature on the women's fight for equality among men, politically and economically, explain how women took charge and fought for their own and others civil liberties.⁵ This research is important to help understand why women felt the need to gain equality and further their rights through activism. Research on the Equal Rights Amendment has also been widespread throughout the years. There has been research on minorities, mostly African-Americans, and their own fight for the amendment to be passed.⁶ However, historians have neglected to assess the different ways in which women fought to pass the Equal Rights Amendment.

⁴ LWV, *Changed Forever*, 10-11.

⁵ For research on feminism and women's activism see: Sara Barbara Brumbaugh Ph. D., *Democratic Experience and Education in the National League of Women Voters* (New York: Sara Barbara Brumbaugh, 1946); Carole Stanford Bucy, "Exercising the Franchise, Building the Body Politic: The League of Women Voters and Public Policy, 1945-1964," (PhD diss., Vanderbilt University, Nashville: 2002); Marisa Chappell, "Rethinking Women's Politics in the 1970s: The League of Women Voters and the National Organization for Women Confront Poverty," *Journal of Women's History* 13:4 (2002), 155-179; Rodney Clare, "The Activist Non-Partisans: The North Carolina League of Women Voters, 1947-1979," (PhD diss., Duke University, Durham, NC: 2001); Jo Freeman, *Women, A Feminist Perspective* (Palo Alto, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company: 1975); Matthews and De Hart, *Sex, Gender, and the Politics of ERA*; Abby Scher, "Cold War on the Home Front: Middle Class Women's Politics in the 1950s," Ph. D. dissertation, New School for Social Research (New York: 1995).

⁶ For research on the Equal Rights Amendment see: Charles W. Fisher, *Minorities, Civil Rights, and Protest*, 2nd Ed (Encino, CA: Dickenson Publishing Company, Inc.: 1977); Serena J. Hoy, "Interpreting Equal Protection: Congress, the Courts, and the Civil Rights Acts," *Journal of Law and Politics* 16:2 (2000), 381-478; Cynthia Deitch, "Gender, Race, and Class Politics and the Inclusion of Women in Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act," *Gender & Society* 7:2 (1993), 183-203.

Minutes from the LWV of Illinois (LWVIL) meetings, transcripts from League conventions, booklets and pamphlets that had been distributed, bulletins for the McLean County LWV (LWVMC), and Newspaper articles, show how and why the League worked so hard to gain the rights they believed women deserved. The secondary sources that I have looked through are also important in allowing for understanding of what this organization went through during the Civil Rights era. This paper follows the LWV from its early 20th century beginnings to its plans to gain the vote for the ERA. I will also examine the LWV in Illinois even though the ERA was never ratified in that state; and at an even more local level of the LWV in McLean County, Illinois.

Women first had to fight for their right to vote. However, the suffrage movement, spanning from the 1840s to 1920s, did not lead to full equality in the eyes of the government, within the workforce, or in the general public. The fact that women had gained the right to vote did not mean that they were fully equal to men. This is why in the early 1920s Alice Paul wrote her own Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), which stated: “Men and women shall have equal rights throughout the United States and in every place subject to its jurisdiction. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.”⁷ Unfortunately, women activist organizations began to split after the ERA was brought to the front lines.

Although there were many women that wanted the ERA to pass; there were plenty of women who did not. Phyllis Schlafly, from Illinois, was part of the anti-ERA movement, specifically STOP ERA and the Eagle Forum. She played on the fears of women, such as the thought that homosexual and abortion rights would be upheld, that women would no longer be protected by their husband, and would be included in the draft. These fears were one of the major reasons that the ERA had difficulty passing. It was also believed that it would infringe on states’ rights and the Federal government would gain too much power through the ERA and that big business would lose money by having to pay women the same amount that men would earn.⁸ The anti-ERA had a lot of pull in the state of Illinois, which was one of the major reasons that the ERA was not passed in the state.

The organizations could not decide whether women needed to be completely equal with men or if they needed special treatment. There were many groups that held the position that if women were to become equal with men it would ruin family values and jeopardize what women had already fought

⁷ LWV, *Changed Forever*, 8.

⁸ Francis, *The History Behind the Equal Rights Amendment*.

for and won. For instance, the shorter work weeks and the improved working conditions were among the top reasons why certain women activist organizations did not approve of the ERA. During the early years of the fight for the ERA these women did have common goals such as the right to independent citizenship, the right to jury duty, and to be allowed access to information on birth control.⁹ One activist group that had a hard time accepting the ERA at first was the LWV.

Originally, the LWV was titled the National American Woman Suffrage Association, then after the suffrage movement changed its direction. The league wanted women to fight to gain rights, such as equal access to jury duty, guardianship, and fair wages, in a bipartisan way. They wanted to protect female industrial workers through special treatment, rather than make them equal to men. However, they felt that if women became equal to men they would lose their protection in the workforce. League members believed that the language of the ERA was too broad and would not help their cause; they preferred a step-by-step approach rather than a full frontal attack. Also, the League did not want to be associated with other organizations only interested with women's issues.¹⁰ They also did not mind the legal classification of women by their sex and were concerned with motherhood and what the ERA would do to affect it.¹¹ Nevertheless, despite early opposition the League eventually changed their position and began to support the ERA throughout the 1960s and especially in the 1970s.

1973

LWVIL fought hard for the passage of the ERA in 1973. A questionnaire had been distributed to the state and local leagues asking them a series of questions to gain information on how they perceived the ERA. One question asked the LWVIL to explain what issues most interested its members and their communities. The LWVIL responded with the ERA and what to do in order to gain passage of the legislation. In addition, they found that coalitions were the "broadest" and the best way for action according to what the local leagues answered in their questionnaires. The National League also wanted to know what the state leagues were doing within the Human Resource brackets. The LWVIL explained that they were lobbying the ERA immensely. They also knew that there was going to be another attempt to pass the bill soon in House

⁹ Perry, *Women in Action*, 19-21.

¹⁰ Perry, *Women in Action*, 8.

¹¹ Donald G. Matthews and Jane Sherron De Hart, *Sex, Gender, and the Politics of ERA* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 28-29.

and the Senate which the women were positive about, despite the earlier decline of it within the House.¹²

The LWVIL also discussed how they would campaign legislators to vote for the ERA. They decided that the best approach would be to only contact swing legislators to hopefully persuade them to vote “yes” for the ERA. It was also agreed that JoAnne Horowitz was to be chairman of the ERA Task Force.¹³ The bill had once again been reintroduced in February after being defeated numerous times previously. There were many hopeful women representatives, although opposition had increased steadily within Congress. Quite a few of the legislators were co-sponsors of the ERA. House Representative Dyer explained that the Supreme Courts, “Thoughtful and wise decision to permit abortions in the first six months of pregnancy and the end of the draft removed two major objections of the amendment.”¹⁴ Taking these two factors out of the equation seemed to be a good way to improve the appeal of the ERA and hopefully gain more votes for ratification; however, the bill failed once again.

In April the LWVIL decided to leave their meeting early to lobby their legislators in person. Illinois was one of only three states to actually have an equal rights clause built in to their constitution, which led to the feeling that the state should not force others to do the same. The fact that Illinois already had an equal rights clause had little to no influence on the LWVIL’s battle to get the ERA ratified for the entire country. The LWVIL felt that all women in all states needed some sort of protection.¹⁵

After the initial start of the ERA campaign, the National League began meeting with other organizations that fought for ratification of the ERA in 1974. For instance, in August the League and the National Federation of Business and Professional Women’s Clubs (BPW) met over dinner to strategize. The League wanted the BPW to use the money earned for the ERA to help states that still needed the ERA ratified. The LWV also wanted the BPW to hire a professional in politics to help in understanding what changes and what was affecting the politics surrounding the ERA. This in turn led to the hiring of Mariwyn Heath to serve as their ERA coordinator.¹⁶ Heath led the creation of ERAmerica, a national ERA coalition.¹⁷

¹² League of Women Voters, Annual Report, 1972 April 1-1974 March 31, League of Women Voters of Illinois, University of Illinois-Chicago, Special Collections. Hereafter LWVIL, UIC-Special Collections.

¹³ Board of Directors, Minutes, 1973 February 14, p. 4, LWVIL, UIC-Special Collections; Board of Directors, Minutes, September 5, 1973, p. 5, LWVIL, UIC-Special Collections.

¹⁴ “Women Try Again to Get Equal Rights,” *Chicago Daily News*, 1973 February 28.

¹⁵ “Women Voters Let Legislators Know ERA Stand,” *Illinois State Register*, 1973 April 4.

¹⁶ Mariwyn Heath dedicated many years to the ratification to the ERA. She was the BPW/OH Past State President, former BPW/PAC Chair and current BPW/USA ERA Coordinator. She also was in Ohio’s Coalition for the Implementation of the ERA and was a consultant to Presidents Ford and Carter on the

The League had accomplished a great deal in the beginning of their ERA campaign. They also made future plans and established different positions to further their knowledge on the ERA. This was an important step in the League's strategy. They wanted to learn more about what they were fighting for, instead of struggling for something they knew little about. The ERA was one of the league's first major battles and they believed that if they fought for what they believed in they would get the goal accomplished.

1974

During the spring of 1974, JoAnne Horowitz proclaimed the week of April 15th as "ERA Week", which allowed members to attend of workshops, meetings, rallies, and conventions. Also during 1974, Peg Blaser, a member of the LWVIL, explained to fellow members their role and affiliation with ERA Central, which was not to be considered a coalition because it only represented BPW and Federally Employed Women. Blaser met with Brooks to discuss what changes ERA Central could make especially since they kept no financial records. They also decided that a statewide meeting would be the best way to communicate their goals. One hundred different organizations for the ERA were asked to attend and decide how to help steer ERA Central in the right direction.¹⁸

The ERA was first mentioned within the bulletins of the LWVMC during 1974. A bulletin sent out in October explained that the ERA was going to come up in legislation at the beginning of 1975. It also gave details on how Illinois was the only state that needed a 3/5th majority to pass the ERA and mentioned a court case that was to determine whether or not the 3/5th majority was unconstitutional. In addition, an essay contest for students' ages 12 through 18 was distributed by the American Association of University Women. The students had to answer the question "why the ERA should become the 27th Amendment?"¹⁹

The LWV from all sections, national, state, and local, began to build steam after developing projects, plans, and fundraisers. The League wanted to pass the ERA as soon as possible. The rights that the amendment would assure were

ERA. In 2000, she was the first recipient of an award to honor her work with the ERA. The award was then to be named the "Mariwyn Heath ERA Award" for all other future recipients. Business and Professional Women/USA, *BPW National Conference 2001: ERA Luncheon Highlighted the Outstanding Contribution of BPW/OH Member Mariwyn Heath*, 2001,

<<http://www.bpwusa.org/i4a/pages/Index.cfm?pageid=3785>> (2007 November 25).

¹⁷ LWV, *Changed Forever*, 12.

¹⁸ Board of Directors, Minutes, 1974 April 3, p. 5, LWVIL, UIC-Special Collections.

¹⁹ League of Women Voters of McLean County, Illinois, Bulletin, Vol. 41, No. 2. 1974 October; LWVMC, Bulletin, Vol. 41, No. 3. 1974 November/ December. Hereafter LWVMC.

rights that all women needed to have protected. The Leagues worked hard to make a name for themselves and to become one of the leading organizations working for the ERA.

1975

North Dakota had ratified the ERA in 1975, bringing the total up to 34 states, but North Carolina voted no and South Carolina tabled it. The LWV decided that they would only hold national meetings in states that had ratified the ERA. ERAmerica, another pro-ERA organization, started to campaign this year as well. ERAmerica was created when the United Nations decided that 1975 was to be “International Women’s Year” in response to the call of women’s rights around the world.²⁰ However, the League did not provide the funds it asked for because they were suffering financially as well, which prevented it from being enormously effective.

The LWVIL Board of Directors discussed plans for a coalition between registering voters and the ERA. They wanted to push those registering to vote to also vote for ERA. The board however, came to the decision not to sanction this because they maintain a boundary between their voter policies and political action. The League also discussed an invitation to join the advisory board being arranged by Kentucky Manpower Development, Inc. There were to be twenty-four town meetings held in twelve states surrounding Kentucky. The advisory board consisted of three anti and pro-ERA groups, as well as, four humanities people that would include two anti and two pro-ERA. At first, the League was going to join through their coalition but after discussion they decided to join the advisory board as the LWVIL, and on the 5th of November the League held a rally for the ERA.²¹ LWVIL decided that the greatest threat to the fight for ratification of the ERA was finances. They realized that without money there would be no way they could lead the fight for ERA ratification. They implemented a plan to ask for donations; one of the plans requested each member of the League in Illinois to donate one dollar a month to the cause until ratification of the amendment.²² The end of 1975 brought good news to the League. A cocktail party they had held

²⁰ Leslie W. Gladstone, *The Long Road to Equality: What Women Won from the ERA Ratification Effort*, <<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/awhhtml/aw03e/aw03e.html>> (25 November 2007).

²¹ Board of Directors, Minutes, 1975 September 10-11, p. 1-3, LWVIL, UIC-Special Collections; Board of Directors, Minutes, 1975 November 3-4, p. 4, LWVIL, UIC-Special Collections.

²² Board of Directors, Minutes, 1975 June 11-12 p.2, LWVIL, UIC-Special Collections; Board of Directors, Minutes, 1975 July 21, p. 4, LWVIL, UIC-Special Collections.

at the end of year brought \$12,000 to the table. They felt this would eventually lead to the \$100,000 needed to fund their ERA campaign.²³

In McLean County, the local League worked diligently to keep the ERA present in the community's mind. The bulletins frequently mentioned the ERA, discussing rallies and the legislative progress, to educate those in the communities of the politics behind the ratification of the bill. Local league members felt that the ERA had a lot of potential and would definitely pass in 1975, but they reminded all to write their Senator and encourage him to vote "yes". Assuming a religious membership, they also asked all to pray. The League also wanted everyone to know that the ERA needed money to continue the campaign. The slogan the local league used to entice groups to not only support but donate as well was, "All the Way with ERA". The LWVMC were obviously on board with the state League, feeling the only ways to pass the amendment was through lobbying and education. The League pushed for the ERA immensely throughout 1975, but to no avail.²⁴ 1975 seemed to be concerned with finances, an important part of any campaign. Without money, progress made with the campaign would slowly dissipate. The League was working hard to earn as much money as they possibly could to better their chances of getting the ERA ratified.

1976

In 1976 ERAmerica turned into an information center for coordinating groups involved with the fight of the ERA. Heath believed that the failure of ERAmerica stemmed from the fact that most members of the organization never put the ERA first on their agenda. No other state had ratified the ERA that year; but they still had a strong stance on the ratification of the ERA, as leaders.²⁵

The LWVUS called upon the Illinois group in 1976 to gather people knowledgeable about the happenings in Illinois. They were especially interested in the merger between the ERA coalition and the ERA Central. The National League wanted to create an umbrella organization that would lobby, educate about the ERA, and raise money, as well.²⁶ However, the LWVIL pulled funding out of ERA Central and joined a coalition of groups that backed the ERA, called ERA Illinois. Donna Schiller, president of the Illinois League, appointed Mary Lubertozzi as the ERA chairman.²⁷ Lubertozzi took her role as

²³ Board of Directors, Minutes, 1976 January 7-8, p. 10, LWVIL, UIC-Special Collections.

²⁴ LWVMC, Bulletin, 1975 January, Vol. 41, No. 4; LWVMC, Bulletin, 1975 February, Vol. 41, No. 5; LWVMC, Bulletin, 1975 March, Vol. 41, No. 6; LWVMC, Bulletin, 1975 October, Vol. 42, No. 2.

²⁵ LWV, *Changed Forever*, 13-14.

²⁶ Board of Directors, Minutes, 1976 January 7-8, p. 10, LWVIL, UIC-Special Collections.

²⁷ Board of Directors, Minutes, 1976 April 21, p. 1, LWVIL, UIC-Special Collections.

chairman very seriously, working diligently to iron out the wrinkles that LWVIL had in pursuing ratification of the ERA. Right from the start she asked questions, such as how far the League would go in getting the “yes” votes and the amendment ratified. The League decided to be aggressive, but still take a traditional non-partisan advance.²⁸ Towards the end of 1976 Lubertozzi noticed that ERA Illinois was losing its driving force. She felt that the League should take the lead in strategizing what should be done in helping Illinois pass the ERA.²⁹ The league in Mclean county felt there was a major problem in getting the ERA passed too. They wanted all members of the League to write their legislators and to let people they know of the crisis. They believed that if Illinois passed the ERA it would influence other states to do the same.³⁰

All the Leagues felt that the ERA was beginning to lose steam. If only they could ratify the ERA, then they could concentrate on making it an amendment. The production of ERA Illinois was an important step for the state. It signified their ability to unify the main groups that were supportive of the ERA. Despite all of the pro-ERA organizations the ERA was still denied.

1977

1977 caused many problems within the backing of the ERA. A resolution was introduced to Congress to extend the deadline for ratification of the ERA to seven years from the existing deadline of March 22, 1979. An important strategy the LWV chose was to stay neutral on the subject of extension. Rather, they supported the idea to work towards the original date. It made sense that the League wanted to continue their main goal for ratification, rather than take a different road for extension.³¹ They were determined to show how concerned they were with ratifying the ERA, rather than allowing more time for ratification. No matter what the date, the LWV was going to work to gain the equal rights that women deserved.

Jean Maack, of Downer’s Grove, was elected the new president of ERA Illinois. According to Lubertozzi, Maack was working industriously to get ERA Illinois organized and ensuring advocates were on the same page with the ERA. They also discussed rules that would govern the ERA-PAC, a group of women from Missouri who were determined to make the state one of the last three to ratify the ERA.³² Lubertozzi felt it would be easier if the League simply

²⁸ Board of Directors, Minutes, 1976 June 29-30, p. 5, LWVIL, UIC-Special Collections.

²⁹ Board of Directors, Minutes, 1976 November 30, p. 2, LWVIL, UIC-Special Collections.

³⁰ LWVMC, Bulletin, 1976 May, Vol. 42, No. 8.

³¹ LWV, *Changed Forever*, 16-17.

³² ERAPAC, *Determined Leadership*, <<http://www.erapac.org/>> (25 November 2007).

made the rules public, doing this would clear up any confusion about the connection of ERA Illinois and ERA-PAC. In November, Maack and Janet Otwell met with George Dunne, president of the Cook County Board of Commissioners in 1977. The women wanted to express the League's views on the ERA, others to know what they felt the ERA meant, and how they felt they were going to achieve it.³³

In Illinois the League was carefully working to get more local leagues involved. Lubertozi explained to the League at a board meeting, that 38 leagues had their own program or outside speaker. There were 25 leagues that had some sort of fundraising event that involved some aspect of the ERA, but 1/3 of the leagues in Illinois did not make a pledge. Action report forms were also distributed and from those returned it was discovered that the most effective forms of action were working for candidates, organizing other groups, raising money, writing legislators, boycotting (though there were leagues that opposed this action), and the PAC. The Leagues were against door-to-door action because it did not fit into the bipartisan mold that the LWV prided themselves in.³⁴

The LWVMC also forged their way toward ratification by organizing "quadrant" meetings. These were four sided meetings that were held in four separate rooms in the same building. Different speakers were asked to discuss a different topic of interest held on different nights. The first topic brought to the table was the ERA.³⁵ The local League members were able to go to these meetings and learn as much as they wanted about the ERA. This is a good example of what local leagues were doing, at the time, to educate about the ERA.

1978

South Carolina and Illinois both denied the ERA in 1978. Kentucky legislators even voted to cancel their ratification of the amendment but the governor vetoed it. Illinois voters denied the ERA twice. Both times the "yes" vote was less than ten short of ratification. It was the three-fifths majority rule that caused the ratification to be overthrown. In any other state the amount of "yes" votes would have allowed for ratification. The League believed they needed to give up on Illinois and look at Florida, Nevada, North Carolina, and Oklahoma as the key players in ratification because the three-fifths majority in Illinois was stifling to ERA ratification in that state. Also, pressure from groups to back the extension of the ERA deadline was also continuing. The League,

³³ Board of Directors, Minutes, 1977 July 12, p. 3, LWVIL, UIC-Special Collections; Board of Directors, Minutes, 1977 November 16, p. 6, LWVIL, UIC-Special Collections.

³⁴ Board of Directors, Minutes, 1978 January 4-5, p. 2, LWVIL, UIC-Special Collections.

³⁵ LWVMC, Bulletin, 1977 February, Vol. 43, No. 5.

however, stood firm on their decision to not go either way on the issue. In fact, they were appalled at the amount of time and energy being taken away from ratification of the ERA. However, they finally broke down when supporters of the deadline used their neutrality against them. They claimed that because the League remained neutral, other organizations should start questioning how devoted to ERA ratification they were, it was almost blackmail. The League finally decided to give their support to the extension but still felt it was most important to continue working toward the original deadline. They feared the extension, and they felt it might allow states that had already ratified the ERA to take back their votes.³⁶

In spring, the Illinois League learned Governor Thompson would attend an ERA event at the Chicago Public Library to help raise support; however, soon after he endorsed the anti-era candidate, State Rep. Roger Keats. His opponent, Jeanne Bradner, was an ERA supporter. The League was furious because it happened the same day they announced the charter members for the “Equal Rights in ’78” campaign. If Keats was elected it would knock out a pro-ERA Rep. The LWVIL had reason to be upset; they knew that one vote could jeopardize the chances of the ERA being ratified.³⁷ The LWV wanted as many pro-ERA members elected to office because the margin of “yes” to “no” votes was so small. The LWVMC were asked to form a group locally for this campaign as well. Around this same time it was announced that the LWVIL would be in charge of the campaign efforts in Champaign, Illinois.³⁸

The state League came up with a new budget for the ERA campaign. They also wanted a cleanup of the bills to get ready for the end of the campaign in June of ’79. They laid off the ERA staff for a short while but then reinstated them in September to work with district groups for the fall elections.³⁹ The League worked as though the extension was not going to happen, they wanted to finalize everything they had been working for. The extension happened though, and the league was allowed a few more years to work on the passage of the ERA.

A convention held on May 10th allowed for an increased positive outlook because checks were pouring in from every corner to help finance the campaign. In fact, on May 8th \$560,864 had been donated before the convention with more money constantly being brought in, allowing a glimmer of hope for the League

³⁶ LWV, *Changed Forever*, 18.

³⁷ “Thompson for ERA-and Foe,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1978 May 14, p. B1.

³⁸ Board of Directors, Minutes, 1978 February 14/15, LWVIL, UIC-Special Collections; Board of Directors, Minutes, 1978 March 14, LWVIL, UIC-Special Collections; LWVMC, Bulletin, 1978 April, Vol. 44, No. 7.

³⁹ Board of Directors, Minutes, 1978 April 13/14 -1978 November/December 30/1, LWVIL, UIC-Special Collections.

members. Towards the end of the convention those states that had not ratified the ERA were adopted by a sister state that already had. Illinois was adopted by California; this sisterly bond would help further the ERA fight in states that were having a difficult time trying to get the amendment ratified.⁴⁰

Another pitfall Illinois league members faced was that the national League was not respecting their boundaries. The LWVIL had made a proposal to the LWVUS that incorporated ideas from the state ERA committee, local leagues, and other organizations involving the fight for ERA ratification to further their campaign. The LWVUS shot down their proposal and the Illinois league felt insulted. The National League was more interested in sending an expert on the ERA of their choosing to the state league to assess the situation and come up with a different plan. They were further disappointed when nothing was accomplished and felt that it hurt their relationships with other pro-ERA organizations. In the end, state leaders wanted to come up with a plan for the execution of the campaign on their own. The Illinois league felt they had a better grasp on the situation in their own state. However, the National League believed the state league was not handling the situation correctly or the ERA would have already been passed.⁴¹

1979

The years that followed were dismal but did include little rays of hope. In 1979 Florida and Nevada both voted “no” to the ratification of the ERA. The extension happened, but many court cases followed, including a court case in Illinois. There were several states that wanted the extension ruled as unconstitutional, including some legislators in Illinois.⁴²

In June of 1979 the National League wanted to expand their ERA position and bring regulations into acquiescence with the laws by: “(a) to eliminate or amend those laws that have the effect of discriminating on the basis of sex; (b) to promote laws that support the goal of the ERA, and (c) to strengthen the enforcement of such existing laws.”⁴³ The league required that the groundwork be laid to act on ERA issues, even if the amendment was not ratified. Another way the LWVUS tried to counter the defeats was to increase funding for ERAmerica. The League and other organizations were encouraged to donate \$10,000 to the effort. New faces were also being appointed to office. Ellouise

⁴⁰ Convention '78 Summary. LWVIL, UIC-Special Collections.

⁴¹ Mary Lubertozzi and Janet Otwell letter to the Members of the National Board. April 30, 1978. LWVIL, UIC-Special Collections

⁴² LWV, *Changed Forever*, 18-19; Board of Directors, Minutes, 1979 January 9-10, LWVIL, UIC-Special Collections.

⁴³ LWV, *Changed Forever*, 21.

Schoettler became the ERA Director and Madeleine Appel became the new ERA Chair. Much had been lost in 1978 and 1979 in the battle for ratification of the ERA. However, the women of the League were not ready to give up. They were working towards what they believed in, an equal nation for all sexes, and hoped one day it would become a reality.⁴⁴

1980

At the League of Women Voters Convention on May 5, 1980 Janet Otwell, a member of the LWVIL asked the President of the United States, Jimmy Carter, what he was personally doing to get the ERA ratified. He answered that he had been meeting with numerous different groups that were pro-ERA and that the ERA campaign was not been as strong as it should be, however; he felt they may be able to get it passed in 1980 because the beginning of the year had been so promising. Carter explained that in the Illinois House six anti- ERA Representatives were replaced with pro-ERA Representatives. He wanted Illinois to ratify the ERA to allow greater ease in getting the amendment ratified within the remaining states. With the League Carter also discussed his relationship with the Mayor of Chicago and they both talked about plans to get the ERA passed.⁴⁵ The President and the LWVIL both agreed on their stance with the ERA, but it was up to the Senate and House to pass it. They understood that an immense amount of work to be done for the amendment to be ratified and they were both willing to do whatever it took to achieve it.

The Republican Party also stopped supporting the ERA in 1979, which caused the League to feel as though they were slowly losing their grip on the fight for ratification of the 38 states needed, regardless of the opposition faced by many, especially Stop-ERA. The national League spent numerous years trying to work out a plan to gain a footing of support within legislation, but nothing was working out. While fighting an uphill battle, especially with the ratification deadline approaching in the upcoming few years, the Illinois League was worked especially hard to gain support. It was constantly being brought up to governing officials to keep them, not only in the loop, but to keep them constantly thinking about the ERA and what should be done to get it ratified.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ LWV, *Changed Forever*, 21.

⁴⁵ No Author, "Address of the President of the United States to the League of Women Voters of the United States National Convention," 1980 May 5, LWVIL, UIC-Special Collections.

⁴⁶ LWV, *Changed Forever*, 22.

1981

The LWVUS spent a lot of time in 1981 advertising for the ERA campaign. The League, the National Business Council, and the Advertising Women of New York helped to form the ERA Communications Task Force. The Task Force consisted of advertising experts who would frame their work around the ERA. The League believed that if they were to create a unified message about the ERA to the public it would be more understandable and acceptable. Schoettler and Heath also created their own projects to help with the campaign, including a research project that would psychologically analyze how the ERA was perceived in the un-ratified states. On October 27, less than a month until the end of the campaign, the League launched the ERA Joint Media Project. The project was an offshoot from the research done by Schoettler and Heath, which would include radio ads exclaiming, "Nothing Can Protect a Woman Like the ERA." However, the radio spots never aired in Illinois, but did air in Florida, Georgia, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Virginia, which may have been due to money issues. It is more than possible that the National League believed Illinois was fighting a losing battle because of the 3/5 majority vote.⁴⁷

The LWVMC discussed in their bulletins that the LWVIL were still working closely with ERA Illinois and planning to concentrate the campaign in areas that were most promising. They explained that they needed better finances in order to pass the ERA. Also, on August 9 it was determined that 63% of the population in McLean County, Illinois supported the ERA.⁴⁸ The LWVMC were trying to pass the ERA with all their might, despite the National League's negative outlook on the situation. They felt that if they could get more financing and a better campaign strategy they would be able to get the amendment passed with no problem.

1982

A big year for the League was 1982. However, in the beginning it seemed as though all their hard work had been for nothing. Towards the end of 1981 the June 1982 extension was ruled illegal and the states that had already voted "yes" to the ERA were allowed to withdraw their ratification. There were also many states at the beginning of the year that denied the ERA, but Mississippi was one that finally voted "yes". This was a big boost for the women of the League because Mississippi had always seemed to be a lost cause. The League was definitely feeling the pressure, despite ratification in a state they had given up hope on. They wrote letters to Senators and important leaders to advise them

⁴⁷ LWV, *Changed Forever*, 22.

⁴⁸ LWVMC, *Bulletin*. 1981 March- 1981 October, Vol. 47-48, No.6-No.2.

that if they voted “yes” they would be remember forever.⁴⁹ The LWV was playing on the egos of men in power to gain the vote they wanted within legislation. This using of men was one reason why women needed the ERA; they did not want to have to play games to get what was entitled to them. Women were constantly giving men more to get a little, it needed to stop.

The end of June brought negative feelings on the road to ratification. North Carolina and Illinois were still voting “no”, but Florida finally ratified. They were still short and the deadline passed. In July of 1982 the LWV was forced to close their campaign offices, but the ERA was still fresh in their minds. They eventually rehired Mary Brooks and created a new national ERA chair held by Pat Jensen. Jensen was important in keeping the ERA alive; however, she was still unable to get another campaign going through the LWV. The national League believed that it was not the right time. The LWV pointed out that throughout the 20th century women had been gaining their rights one by one, and although it was not how they had originally planned, the gaining of right was what they wanted. They knew they would have to fight long and hard every time they wanted to get a new right, but believed that if Congress guaranteed equality to all women, “It would violate the sole premise of the ERA.”⁵⁰ They believed it would not be acceptable because rights are not supposed to be given according to gender. If Congress passed the bill, it would be along gender lines and it showed that women were not given the same amount of rights to men. In other words, men received their rights naturally, whereas women had to fight for theirs.

Conclusion

All levels of the LWV worked diligently to get the ERA passed. The state League worked side by side with the national League to try and pass the ERA in a state that everyone believed in the beginning was a shoe in for ratification. McLean County, although it was only a locally affiliated League, made important strides in maintaining support for the ERA. It asked for the communities to help and reported back to the state League when asked. Although the ERA did not pass before the deadline and the national campaign was disbanded immediately after, they were still persistent in gaining equality. The fight to get the ERA passed was a definite battle. What many believed to be an easy goal, turned out to be one of the hardest battles women had to fight. There were many women who spent a good part of their lives fighting for equality.

⁴⁹ LWV, *Changed Forever*, 24.

⁵⁰ LWV, *Changed Forever*, 26.

Women today need to realize that the rights we have today were not simply handed out. They were fought for; therefore women should not take their rights for granted. Today women are still not fully equal to men; there are many jobs in which men make, on average, more than women. However, this gap is slowly closing. The LWV was one of many organizations that fought for the ERA bill to pass; in fact, they were the ones that spearheaded the operation. Although, the ERA was not passed and is still not part of the constitution today, the LWV fought hard and paved the way for many other women to continue to battle for equality today.

The Final Chapter in the Nazi Assault against Prisoners: A Historiographic Look at the Evacuation of Camps and the Ensuing Death Marches, 1941-1945

By Roy Olson

As a result of the Red Army's advancement on the Eastern Front in mid-1944, the Nazi military and political situation developed into one of significant desperation. In regards to the war the Nazis waged against the Allies and their assault on Jews and other prisoners, their goals were quickly becoming more difficult to realize. Most notably, since eastern Poland served as the remaining buffer zone between the Red Army and the Death Camps, the Soviet advance through Poland had important implications for the existence of Nazi concentration and extermination camps. Since the Nazis did not want the world to learn of their crimes against humanity, they ordered swift liquidation of camps. The majority of death marches began in mid-1944 and lasted until the end of the war. Since orders to liquidate the camps were issued quickly, the arrangement of transportation by train for prisoners was impractical. As a result, the prisoners in Nazi concentration and extermination camps were forced to march from the camps to destinations all across Europe. In what victims eventually called "death marches" (*Todesmärsche*), the Nazis moved thousands of Jews and other prisoners to camps and other holding sites still within the German sphere of influence.¹ Through some of the most brutal conditions imaginable, tens of thousands of prisoners were marched westward from camps on the brink of Soviet liberation to areas within the grasp of the German Reich. The death marches produced an astounding death total, estimated as high as 50 percent of the concentration camp population in early 1945.² Unquestionably, the death marches provided the grim epilogue to one of the most horrific events in world history.

This final chapter in the Holocaust has been seriously neglected by post-war historical scholarship. As early as 1983, Israeli Holocaust historian, Yehuda Bauer noted, "there exists...no detailed research on these last, terrible, phases of Nazi terror."³ Interestingly, some historians have focused on the last days of Nazi power, but do not include the death marches.⁴ Although the death marches

¹ Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997), 327.

² Yehuda Bauer, "The Death Marches, January – May 1945," *Modern Judaism* 3(1) (1983): 2.

³ Bauer, "The Death Marches," 4.

⁴ For a significant source of scholarship regarding the final days of the Nazi reign, see Stephen G. Fritz, *Endkampf: Soldiers, Civilians, and the Death of the Third Reich* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2004). Although Fritz provides an important study on the chaos that surrounded the Nazi party at during the waning days of the war, he fails to include the death marches as a significant event.

are briefly included in many historical monographs that focus on the chaotic nature of Germany at the end of the war, those monographs should include more information regarding the death marches as they were a major part of the Nazis' late war strategy. In fact, "the marches and evacuations continued to consume huge amounts of manpower and other resources that the Germans could have used against the onrushing enemy armies."⁵ Therefore, despite available scholarship regarding the end of the Third Reich and World War II, and plenty of scholarship regarding the atrocities and the Final Solution that have become known as the Holocaust, historical research has virtually abandoned the Nazis' final act of evil.

As Yehuda Bauer states, "with the vast literature on Nazism, Nazi terror and the concentration camp system, no detailed research on the death marches has been attempted as yet."⁶ Although a historian has yet to compile a major study regarding the death marches, some scholars have written shorter pieces on the subject. For instance, minor research on the death marches are included in major sources, such as encyclopedias and articles published in conjunction with Israel's Holocaust Remembrance Authority, the Yad Vashem.⁷ In addition, short evaluations of the death marches have also been discussed in other studies that focus on different aspects of the Holocaust.⁸ There have also been some articles published that address the death marches, but no monograph.⁹ Therefore, it is imperative to evaluate these already existing pieces of research to move forward with further recognition of the topic.

To understand the scholarship on the death marches, one must be clear regarding the context of events. Daniel Goldhagen, author of *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*, writes of the death marches:

The marches can be broken up into three distinct periods.

The first period, in which few marches occurred, extends from the onset of the war to the beginning of the Germans'

⁵ Donald M. McKale, *Hitler's Shadow War: The Holocaust and World War II* (Lanham: Taylor Trade, 2002), 378.

⁶ Bauer, "The Death Marches," 4.

⁷ For death march information in major references, see Samuel Krakowski, "Death Marches" in Israel Gutman ed., *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust* (New York: Macmillan Library Reference USA, 1995), 349-354; United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, "Death Marches,"

<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/article.php?lang=en&ModuleId=10005162>; and Yad Vashem, "Death Marches," http://www1.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%206260.pdf.

⁸ For scholarship on the death marches in books discussing other aspects of the Holocaust, see McKale, *Hitler's Shadow War*; and Goldhagen, *Willing Executioners*.

⁹ For articles dealing directly with the death marches, see Bauer, "The Death Marches"; Daniel Blatman, "The Death Marches: Who was Responsible for What?" *Yad Vashem Studies* 28 (2000): 155-201; and Eleonore Lappin, William Templar, trans., "The Death Marches of Hungarian Jews Through Austria in the Spring of 1945," *Yad Vashem Studies* 28 (2000): 203-242.

systematic extermination of the Jews in June 1941. The second covers the years of extermination until the summer of 1944. The third covers the time of the Reich's denouement, when its doom was understood to be near, when all that the Germans could do was to hold on and stave off the end for a while longer, and when the extermination program was winding down.¹⁰

In many cases, "death marches were the ambulatory analogue to the cattle car."¹¹ During these marches across the country, the Germans displayed no concern for the lives of prisoners as they marched. Much like the transportation of prisoners in cattle cars to concentration and death camps, during which significant numbers of people died, the death marches were a tool of extermination.

Of the three areas of scholarship presented earlier (reference materials, monographs concerned with different topics, and articles), major references discuss the death marches by providing a simple overview. These sources include among others, encyclopedias and internet sources linked with Holocaust Organizations, such as the Yad Vashem. The following analysis of reference work on the death marches will focus on two sources: *The Encyclopedia of the Holocaust* and an article called "The Death Marches" on the website of the Yad Vashem. Although the reference materials utilized for this study contribute a limited amount of information, with the lack of scholarship that exists overall, it is important to acknowledge these sources and evaluate them.

First, *the Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, edited by Israel Gutman, is a series of short articles focused on important subjects regarding the Holocaust which provide a short abstract of the person, place, or event in question. The article about the death marches, by Samuel Krakowski gives an acceptable overview of the topic. For instance, the entry includes information regarding all three periods as described by Goldhagen.

The encyclopedia entry begins by explaining how the death marches were named. According to the entry, "the term was coined by prisoners in the Nazi concentration camps and was later used by historiographers of the Nazi regime."¹² After the short introduction, the overview addresses death marches that took place early in the war. In fact, "the first death march organized by the SS took place in Poland, in mid-January 1940."¹³ That death march included

¹⁰ Goldhagen, *Willing Executioners*, 327. Goldhagen writes in his endnotes that the "periodization" of the death marches has not been used by historians such as Bauer.

¹¹ Goldhagen, *Willing Executioners*, 328.

¹² Krakowski, "The Death Marches," in *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, 350.

¹³ Krakowski, "The Death Marches," in *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, 350.

Polish prisoners of war, only a few of whom reached their destination. The marching of POWs continued during the beginning of the war against the Soviet Union as the Nazis accumulated more and more Soviet prisoners. Notably, the initial death marches, according to Krakowski, did not involve Jews.

After briefly describing the initial death marches of POWs, Krakowski continues his entry by detailing the death marches that took place later in the war. Like other authors highlighted in this study, Krakowski cites the Red Army's advancement as a major factor in the initiation of the death marches. As the Soviets pushed the Germans back and liberated occupied territories, the Germans evacuated camps throughout Eastern Europe, most notably in Poland. The entry highlights specific gruesome incidents that illustrate the horror of some death marches.¹⁴ As Krakowski explains, the death marches did not cease until the war had ended. Other than an article written by him, Krakowski cites two other articles in his bibliography, including Bauer's piece earlier cited in this essay, and an article by Polish historian Andrzej Strzelecki. Relying on secondary research to compile this short entry of the death marches, Krakowski provides a short overview of the death marches, which can be valued as a short reference, but provides little assistance for further research.

In addition to *the Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, the Yad Vashem's web page also provides a short informational abstract regarding the death marches. Like the preceding encyclopedia entry, the Yad Vashem's overview of the death marches begins early in the war, claiming the "first large-scale death march took place in the summer of 1941."¹⁵ These first large-scale death marches included mainly Soviet POWs and did not involve many Jews.

As time passed, however, the death marches began to incorporate, even become directed towards Jews. Like the other authors, the Yad Vashem writers put most of the death marches in the context of the later war. It was during these marches that the number of Jewish victims heavily increased. Again, with the allied pursuit of the Germans from the West and the Soviet advancement to the East, the Nazis evacuated concentration camps, in hopes to salvage their control over the abundance of prisoners. During the final months of the war, the Yad Vashem estimates that the Nazis forced at least 250,000 of its 700,000 remaining prisoners on death marches. The intense ruthlessness of Nazi guards on the death marches, combined with the poor physical conditions, including

¹⁴ Krakowski highlights the evacuation of the Seerappen camp, a satellite of the Stutthof camp and describes it as especially "brutal and tragic." After the evacuation, "the Nazis drove all the prisoners into the sea and machine-gunned them." Krakowski cites that only 13 survivors have been recorded. For detailed explanations of various evacuations, see Krakowski, "The Death Marches," in *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, 351-353.

¹⁵ Yad Vashem, "Death Marches."

bad weather and inhumane treatment, caused the death of as many as 250,000 people on marches throughout the war.

Since they are not intended to be a complete study or book, these materials are extremely brief. They provide statistics and in some case studies, but none of which can truly address the magnitude of destruction caused by the death marches. Although these materials provide a quick overview, they are hardly enough to constitute influential scholarship on the subject. The *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust* provides a better source for further research because of its citation of sources. Unfortunately, although the Yad Vashem is an internationally renowned organization, its failure to cite sources makes it a difficult source for further research.

Scholarship regarding the death marches is also contained as chapters in books with different topics regarding the Holocaust. For example, Donald McKale's book, *Hitler's Shadow War*, includes a short section on the death marches within a chapter documenting the fading German war effort. In addition, Daniel Jonah Goldhagen's study on perpetrators of the Holocaust provides probably the most groundbreaking research on the death marches analyzed in this article. Overall, portions of books and chapters within books dealing with the Holocaust provide a good grounding for further work.

Beginning his section on the death marches in the summer of 1944, Donald McKale clearly aims to connect the death marches to the deterioration of the German military and the importance of closing the concentration camps before being overrun. McKale refers to the motivation behind the death marches as "yet another effort by the Nazis to conceal from the world what they had done in the camps."¹⁶ In addition to the Nazi Party's inner-circle's desire to initiate the death marches, McKale also shortly discusses the rationale behind the perpetrators involvement. For instance, "guards did not have to be hardcore anti-Semites or even Nazis to realize that they were much safer moving with their charges into territories still in German hands rather than facing the alternative: a trip in the opposite direction."¹⁷ The motivation of Germans to be guards was, in some cases, one of survival not one of pure hatred.

Since McKale's book is a survey, it should not be expected to give too much attention to the death marches. Although the information in McKale's section is consistent with other sources consulted for this essay, it lacks ample citation. Since citation information provides a researcher with alternative scholarship to consult, citations prove to be an important contribution to further research. However, when

¹⁶ McKale, *Hitler's Shadow War*, 379.

¹⁷ McKale, *Hitler's Shadow War*, 379-380.

a piece of research does not cite or expand on key information, it becomes a less valuable research tool. Overall, McKale's section on the death marches provides good information for a survey, but the information is limited as the death marches were not a main part of McKale's study.

Daniel Goldhagen and his critically acclaimed (and often maligned) study, *Hitler's Willing Executioner* also provides an example of a book that addresses the Nazi death marches. Throughout his book, Goldhagen wishes to "explain why the Holocaust occurred, to explain how it could occur."¹⁸ Goldhagen focuses on three main issues: "the perpetrators of the Holocaust, German anti-Semitism, and the nature of German society during the Nazi period. Ultimately, Goldhagen uses a detailed investigation of death marches to analyze his three main focuses.

As stated earlier, Goldhagen's study on the death marches is truly groundbreaking, because it is a more extended study than most other sources provide. Goldhagen details one such death march following the clearing of the Helmbrechts Camp, a satellite of the Flossenbürg Camp, located on the modern day border of Germany and the Czech Republic.¹⁹ Different from many of the other scholarship presented in this essay, Goldhagen's research on this particular death march provides a different angle. Most scholarship deals with the death marches that took place in the East and moved prisoners to the west, ultimately avoiding the Red Army. Goldhagen's account of the march originating from Helmbrechts, presents information of a death march that moved prisoners east in order to avoid American and British troops.²⁰ By providing a different aspect to the death marches, Goldhagen's research provides an opportunity to gather new information.

Goldhagen's objective was not to identify an example of a death march that avoided American troops instead of Soviet troops. Rather, Goldhagen uses this example to show that the Nazis initiated these death marches to keep the possibility of slaughter open. The death march from Helmbrechts, according to Goldhagen's research, had no clearly defined destination, and if it had continued much longer, all the prisoners would have been killed. To Goldhagen, the death marches provide evidence that the Nazis were willing to take whatever action necessary to completely eliminate their Jewish prisoners. The death march from Helmbrechts began on April 13, 1945, a mere five days before the Americans liberated the camp. According to Goldhagen, "the Jews departed Helmbrechts in deplorable health and were denied available extra clothing and food."²¹

¹⁸ Goldhagen, *Willing Executioners*, 5.

¹⁹ Goldhagen, *Willing Executioners*, 335.

²⁰ For a detailed map of the death march from Helmbrechts, see Goldhagen, *Willing Executioners*, 347.

²¹ Goldhagen, *Willing Executioners*, 347.

Coupled with cold and snowy weather, the lack of proper clothing and nutrition spelled doom for the majority of those being marched. The Germans had extra food available to give prisoners, but they refused and forced prisoners to starve.²² The action of the German guards against the marching prisoners was in no doubt deplorable, supporting Goldhagen's thesis that all Germans, influenced by their deep-seated anti-Semitism, did whatever possible to see the destruction of European Jews.

Like other scholars, Goldhagen attributes the approaching enemy armies as the reason for the death marches from Helmbrechts. The camp's commander, Alois Dörr, "did evacuate the camp under standing orders to do so when the Americans approached." Upon relaying his orders, Goldhagen writes, "it appears likely that he did tell them [German troops] to shoot all stragglers."²³ Goldhagen, however, provides new information relating to the death marches, specifically the march that took place from Helmbrechts. In fact, Goldhagen cites information that shows German guards "were under *explicit orders* from the highest authority *not to kill the Jews*." Goldhagen writes that a German courier "informed Dörr that Himmler had expressly forbidden that any more Jews be killed."²⁴ Goldhagen provides new research regarding the connection between the center and the periphery during the death marches.

Goldhagen's carefully constructed argument relating to the death marches unquestionably supports his thesis. His research is based mainly on the investigation and court case of Dörr and the investigation of the Helmbrechts Camp. Although Goldhagen provides new information and encourages curiosity regarding the death marches, perhaps his greatest accomplishment was the motivation he initiated in other Holocaust historians. Among the response to Goldhagen's thesis were a number of critiques from the scholarly community. Of these dozens of reviews, Norman G. Finkelstein and Ruth Bettina Birn published a short evaluation of Daniel J. Goldhagen's thesis that famed historian and Hitler biographer Ian Kershaw described as "a devastating critique" of the Goldhagen thesis.²⁵ Comprised of a separate article by each author, Finkelstein

²² Goldhagen, *Willing Executioners*, 348-349. Himmler's orders referred to by the German courier are unclear. It is possible that Himmler ordered officers to avoid killing Jewish prisoners, as they might have been valuable as bargaining tools. For further scholarship regarding the issue of using Jews as bargaining chips, see Yehuda Bauer, *Jews for Sale?: Nazi-Jewish Negotiations, 1933-1945* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), Katrin Paehler, "Espionage, Ideology, and Personal Politics: The Making and Unmaking of a Nazi Foreign Intelligence Service" (PhD diss., American University, 2004), 430-431, and Peter Padfield, *Himmler: Reichs Führer SS* (London: Cassell, 2001).

²³ Goldhagen, *Willing Executioners*, 355.

²⁴ Goldhagen, *Willing Executioners*, 356.

²⁵ A supplement critique of Goldhagen's thesis can be found in Christopher R. Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1998). In

and Birn's publication, *A Nation on Trial*, uses Goldhagen's thesis to conduct research of their own. Although their entire book focuses on different aspects of the Goldhagen debate, for the purpose of this essay, only their research regarding the death marches will be analyzed.

Birn discusses Goldhagen's work on the death marches and draws from his scholarship to make her own assumptions. For instance, unlike Goldhagen, who tailors the story of the death marches to support his thesis, Birn cites the fact that there were Jews and non-Jews marched through the countryside. In fact, she notes that as many as two thirds of those forced to take part in the death march were not Jewish.²⁶ Birn also calls attention to Goldhagen's assumption that all the German guards on the march, and the German citizens, were exceptionally brutal to those being marched. Through new research, however, Birn discovers interesting facts about the death march from Helmbrechts. First, she notes that many guards on that particular death march were from Hungary and Romania. Nazi use of auxiliary troops became more common toward the end of the war when their supply of available troops began to decline.²⁷ She also notes that while many guards were in fact brutal to the victims, some guards acted in the opposite manner. She attributes that same fact to civilians by writing, "in the Helmbrechts March, the German population seems to have been supportive of the victims."²⁸ Birn's main objective was to discredit the Goldhagen thesis by conducting supplemental research about the Helmbrechts Camp using investigation reports, and in the process she presents interesting new facts on the topic.

Amidst the disagreement and critique of different arguments, scholars like Goldhagen and Birn consistently uncover new information. Each author used a case study to support their arguments, which provides a narrow view of the entire topic of death marches. It will be through the use of many case studies, not just one or two examples from satellite camps, which will provide insight into the overall implementation and execution of the death marches.

Among the forms of scholarship discussed in this essay, the articles are entire pieces focused specifically on the death marches. Three historians, Eleonore Lappin, Daniel Blatman, and Yehuda Bauer have published articles

the new afterward, added after the publishing of Goldhagen's book, Browning responds to Goldhagen's comments about Browning's book. Since both authors used the same documents and arrived at vastly different conclusions, their books take on different perspectives. Needless to say, unlike Goldhagen's book, Browning did not deal with the death marches on the same level.

²⁶ Norman G. Finkelstein & Ruth Bettina Birn, *A Nation on Trial: The Goldhagen Thesis and Historical Truth* (New York: Owl Books, 1998), 128.

²⁷ For scholarship regarding auxiliary troops and their actions against Jewish prisoners, see Browning, *Ordinary Men*.

²⁸ Finkelstein & Birn, *A Nation on Trial*, 128-129.

focused exclusively on the death marches. Scholarly articles such as these have the power to be very influential. However, since articles do not command the same impact as books, they fail to reach an extended audience. Nonetheless, for the purpose of analyzing historiography, articles can provide insight into what is available to the historical community.

Eleonore Lappin employs a specific case study to investigate the death marches.²⁹ Like Goldhagen, Lappin constricts her study to the Jewish victims of the death marches, namely Hungarian Jews. In her article, "The Death Marches of Hungarian Jews Through Austria in the Spring of 1945," Lappin argues that the shortage of labor in the Reich, brought upon by the shortage of eastern laborers due to the advancement of the Red Army, was the main initiating factor to the death marches.³⁰ Drawing her information mainly from trial hearings conducted after the war, Lappin discredits the assumption that the murder of many Jews on the death marches was a result of the war. She writes, "the murders immediately before and during the death marches were perpetrated on the basis of clear and uniform orders. The shooting of the sick and those unable to walk was commonplace in concentration-camp evacuations."³¹ Lappin admits that in many cases Jews were too sick to be marched and were left behind. In fact, "During the evacuation of the forced-labor camp for Hungarian Jews in western Hungary on March 28, 1945, some 200 sick inmates were left behind together with several nurses."³² Therefore, there was an inconsistency in the execution of orders among camp guards throughout the Reich.

Overall, Lappin estimates that 23,000 Hungarian Jews died during the death marches through Austria. After the Arrow Cross Party came to power in October 1944, the remaining Hungarian Jews were able to be deported from Budapest. However, between October 1944 and January 1945 when Auschwitz was evacuated, there was not enough time to exterminate all the Hungarian Jews. Initially, Hungarian Jews were deported to extermination camps and murdered upon arrival. The prisoners that the Nazis were unable to exterminate at camps were led on death marches through Austria. It is the experiences of those Hungarian Jews that provides Lappin's focus. Lappin's case study provides important scholarship regarding the Hungarian Jews and their experiences towards the end of the war. If considered collectively, Goldhagen's study of the death march from Helmbrechts, and Lappin's study of Hungarian Jews marching through Austria provide important insight into the death marches.

²⁹ Lappin is a researcher at the Institute for the History of Jews in Austria.

³⁰ Lappin, "Death March of Hungarian Jews," 2.

³¹ Lappin, "Death March of Hungarian Jews," 15.

³² Lappin, "Death March of Hungarian Jews," 17.

Daniel Blatman, professor of history at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, is the author of a significant article relating to the death marches called, “The Death Marches, January-May 1945: Who Was Responsible for What?” Published in 2000, Blatman’s article focuses primarily on the communication between the high ranking Nazi officers and camp commanders and guards. Blatman argues, “there can be no doubt that the guiding principle in Himmler’s orders to the camp commandants—not to permit a single prisoner to fall into enemy hands alive—was also transmitted to the commanders of the evacuation and the columns.”³³ According to Blatman, a problem occurred when troops other than SS and camp guards were appointed to serve as guards for prisoners. They, Blatman writes, “did not know exactly what their assignment was.”³⁴

In addition, Blatman also uncovers the origins of what became the death marches. Interestingly, “the foundation for the entire evacuation process was laid in the autumn of 1944, at a time when the system was still operating in a comparatively orderly manner.”³⁵ Blatman identifies that the plans to evacuate the camp were created well before the camps were in danger of being overrun. The planning benefited the Germans partially during early evacuations in January and February 1945, because they knew where to send prisoners. However, as Blatman explains, “the panicked flight from the approaching Red Army, the harsh winter conditions, and the hundreds of thousands of civilian refugees fleeing westward all complicated the evacuation operations and led to the murder of thousands of prisoners.”³⁶ Therefore, the Germans had a plan to evacuate prisoners in an orderly manner, but that plan was disrupted early by events outside the Nazis’ control. In March and April 1945, the places previously reserved for evacuated prisoners were no longer vacant. Prisoners from camps emptied during the spring 1945 had no place to go, which led to even more murders.³⁷

From Blatman’s article, it is obvious that members of the Nazi inner-circle, like Himmler, communicated with those at camps, but the orders were disrupted. Understanding this communication is crucial to fully comprehending the intention of the death marches. As Blatman explains, the intention was not to liquidate as many prisoners as possible by marching them. Rather, the Germans sought to preserve the lives of prisoners, assuming they would be valuable at a later time. Trying to uncover the orders that precipitated the death marches,

³³ Blatman, “The Death Marches,” 198.

³⁴ Blatman, “The Death Marches,” 199.

³⁵ Blatman, “The Death Marches,” 200.

³⁶ Blatman, “The Death Marches,” 200.

³⁷ Blatman, “The Death Marches,” 200-201.

Blatman concludes, “probably not a single one of those responsible for handing down this order imagined at the time that it would lead, within some six months, to such horrible carnage.”³⁸ Blatman blames the death marches on the confusion between the center and the periphery and their inability to communicate effectively. The late war situation of the Nazis and their military was in chaos, but to completely lose the meaning of orders seems questionable. The horrific events that took place on, and as a result of the death marches, seem like more than simply confusion of orders. Blatman’s article relies on a combination of primary and secondary sources, helping to drive his research. Ranging from affidavits of municipal police to Allied investigational reports, this article uses a wide variety of available research. Since his article is supported almost fully by primary research, readers are not only introduced to credible information, but are also exposed to a variety of sources relating to the death marches.

Lastly, Yehuda Bauer’s article, “The Death Marches, January – May, 1945,” confronts the issue regarding to the lack of scholarship head on. Although his article is relatively old, published in 1983, and unable to address current scholarship regarding the death marches, his piece still covers many of the points discussed in the previously mentioned pieces of scholarship. Despite calling out Holocaust historians to research this topic, his article has not had encouraged any historian to seek a large research project. In his article, Bauer spells out the problems historians face when dealing with the death marches. He cites statistics, the intention of the SS, and knowledge of the allies as major problems resulting from the lack of research on the topic.³⁹

Responding to the problem created by statistics, Bauer states, “it is impossible to estimate the number of victims,” mainly because, “no reliable computation exists of the number of camp survivors.”⁴⁰ He suggests that further research might provide more accurate estimations, but that present research has yet to yield accurate estimates. Acknowledging the context of Bauer’s words, at the time of this publication, “present research” referred to research conducted before 1983. Since then, however, as other authors have pointed out, the statistics regarding the death marches are becoming clearer.

The problem connected to the SS, involves inconsistencies in Himmler’s motives make it difficult to judge the motives of the SS. For example, he was originally thought to have ordered the evacuation of the camps in mid-January 1945, but later allowed the liberation of concentration camps willingly.⁴¹ The last problem, intervention of the Allies, dominates the second half of Bauer’s

³⁸ Blatman, “The Death Marches,” 155-156.

³⁹ For a complete list of Bauer’s questions regarding the death marches, see Bauer, “The Death Marches,” 3.

⁴⁰ Bauer, “The Death Marches,” 3.

⁴¹ Bauer, “The Death Marches,” 4-5.

article. Eventually, Bauer concludes, “the disaster of the death marches could hardly have been decisively affected by allied action. Yet, determined Allied intervention with the Red Cross might well have brought food and protection.”⁴² Bauer condemns the lack of Allied intervention, ultimately resulting in death for thousands of people.

Bauer’s article, which set the benchmark for historical research on the death marches, seems to have had little success in recruiting historians to take on this topic as a major research project. The death marches, which he writes, “were the bottom-most pit of the hell they [prisoners] went through,” have not received the historical recognition they warrant. Bauer relies mainly on primary sources, but his secondary sources are also strong. However, in support of his argument, those secondary sources are not centered on the death marches. Mostly, they are studies focused on the end of the Final Solution. Nevertheless, Bauer’s sources, although outdated, help him provide a groundbreaking study of the death marches at the time. In fact, Bauer’s article was used as a source in the death marches entry in *The Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*.

From these references, short portions of books, and articles, it is obvious that secondary information exists on the death marches. Therefore, why has there not been a major research project on the subject? The critical analysis of these pieces of scholarship also yields a fair amount of primary sources regarding the death marches. Lappin’s article used testimonials of trial hearings and Goldhagen’s study employed personal statements from German officers. Daniel Blatman’s article cited affidavits and investigational reports, and Bauer’s article retrieved primary evidence from Soviet news reports and personal letters. Primary sources are important because although historians have a number of personal testimonies, they tell little about the state of the Nazi government during the death marches and provide little insight into the motives of the perpetrators.

Presently, historians have access to numerous secondary studies and a great deal of primary research related to an extremely important topic regarding the last stage of the Final Solution. The death marches proved significant in the overall scheme of the Holocaust because even in the waning days of the war, prisoners were still being murdered at astounding rates. The death marches represent more than another gruesome example of Nazi ideology in its most confused and chaotic state. Therefore, the historical community is doing itself a major disservice by lacking a definitive piece of scholarship on the Holocaust’s final chapter.

⁴² Bauer, “The Death Marches,” 19.

A Divided Shadow: A Look Back at the Black Feminist Movement, 1950s-1970s

By Missy Pietruszynski

“All I gotta do is sit and wait/ sit and wait and it’s gonna find me/ all I gotta do is sit and wait if I can learn how...you get yours and I’ll get mine/ if I learn to sit and wait/ you got yours/ I want mine/ and I’m gonna get it/ cuz I gotta get it/ cause I need to get it/ if I learn how...”¹ These words are an excerpt from the poem “All I Gotta Do” by feminist and poet Nikki Giovanni who calls upon black women to recognize that the time has come to unite and pursue what is rightfully theirs: equal rights and opportunities in American society. Giovanni’s poetry is known for its urgent call for black people, especially black women to realize their identities and understand their surroundings as part of a dominated white culture.² During the 1960s in American society there was an overwhelming awareness of race oppression that black women experienced which gave rise to a “black poetry.”³ Nikki Giovanni’s writing became an anthem for black women everywhere. No longer was black feminism a thought, a simple state of conscience, it was an action.

The face of feminism cannot be characterized by one specific race or ideologue. The experience of African American women during the feminist movements in America’s second-wave was much different than that experienced by white women. The Black Feminist movement grew out of, and in response to, both the Black Liberation Movement and the Women’s Movement.⁴ During the late 1950s and early 1960s the image of the black woman was shattered, stereotyped, and forgotten. It was more common that when the term “black” was used it was equated with black men, and “woman” was equated with white women.⁵ Yet the needs of a black woman differed dramatically from the needs of white women. Black women were the invisible participants in their own race,

¹ Nikki Giovanni is a Black American poet, whose work influenced many throughout the years of the Black Feminist Movement. Giovanni, born in Knoxville, Tennessee in 1943, attended Fisk University. She graduated in 1967 and moved on to study at the University of Pennsylvania’s School of social work and Columbia University’s School of Fine Arts. Giovanni now works as a professor in the English department of Virginia Polytechnical Institute. Nikki Giovanni, “All I Gotta Do.” Available on <http://members.tripod.com/%7ERaincloud771/poetry/nikki/alligotta.htm> (accessed November 24, 2007).

² Virginia Hiltz and Mike Sell, “Black Arts Movement: Nikki Giovanni,”

<http://www.umich.edu/~eng499/people/giovanni.html> (accessed November 24, 2007).

³ “Nikki Giovanni,” <http://www.umich.edu/~eng499/people/giovanni.html> (accessed November 24, 2007).

⁴ Chicago Women’s Liberation Union, “Her story Project, But some of Us are Brave,”

<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/wlm/color.html> (accessed October 15, 2007).

⁵ “Herstory Project, But some of Us are Brave,” <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/wlm/color.html> (accessed October 15, 2007).

ignored by society and left in the shadow of the women's movement. The black feminist movement grew out of the ignorance of society. This reality to the triple oppression experienced by black women- race, sex, and internal conflict- forced many black feminists to see that although the women's movement claimed unity, there was in fact, separation.

It is the black female consciousness that provided the backbone of many organizations created in the late 1960s and throughout the 70s. This paper explores the development of black feminist thought through the 1950s and into the development and decline of the National Black Feminist Organization in 1975. Undoubtedly, this particular feminist movement was a direct response to the predominately white women's movement and the very masculine civil rights movement. The black feminist movement separated themselves on several levels of ideology. These ideologies were based upon the status of black women in American society. Stereotypes that developed within society perpetuated black women to form their own movement as they felt a certain lack of identification with white women and black men. As these women began to develop their own notions of personal, social, economic, and political equality the black feminist movement began to take off. The National Black Feminist Organization (NBFO) is a direct result of black women's needs to form a separate feminist organization. To understand the prominence of the NBFO in the black feminist movement, I examine the stereotypes and images of black women that developed from Cold War attitudes about women, and how those attitudes propelled black women to separate themselves from the masses.

Historians often document second-wave feminism as truly developing in the early 1960s and lasting well into the 1980s. The material is intensely focused on the encouragement of women to understand the plight of their personal lives and to be actively involved within the political realm of social change. Unfortunately, the women given most credit during this time period are white, middle-class women. Little recognition is given to the African American women who rose against discrimination and segregation, and really represented the ideologies behind the second-wave feminism. Scholars began recognizing the African American struggle of second-wave feminism with the advent of third world feminism. It is imperative that scholars give notice to the rise of black feminism within the second-wave to show the stratification within the movement itself. The study of the black women's movement has been lost in a sea of research devoted to both the civil rights movement and mainstream feminism; however recent scholarship concern the role that black feminism played in the expansion of the ideals within the women's movement itself. As

literature is being written, we are beginning to find the crucial role these black feminists played in expanding goals within the women's movement.⁶

As the women's movement arose there was an undeniable caste system that existed within society. The movement was to fight this caste system which put women on the very bottom and served to use and exploit women as a whole. It was a situation that women could not withdraw from and certainly could not overthrow.⁷ By this time women had the right to vote and other political and social gains that did not exist prior to first-wave feminism. What existed now was a de-facto segregation of women from men and white women from black women. White notions of womanhood during the late 1950s and 60s placed national stereotypes on African American women which caused racial and sexist discrimination and allowed for the rise of organized activism and the creation of the National Black Feminist Organization.

In women's movement literature there seems to be an overarching theme of hegemony and unity. As more literature comes out that is separating the two movements, we find that this simply is not true. The image based both on race and gender of African American women is a topic that many scholars are now taking into context. Although more literature is being written on this topic it is still not substantial enough to represent the struggles of these women on a larger scale. Literature, although not an abundance, has been written about the negative stereotypes that black women experienced during this time period, especially concerning motherhood. What mass literature seems to lack is the recognition of these black women who were very much a part of the feminist movement. The social context and the personal lives of African American women gave a multicultural aspect to the movement which is far too commonly unrepresented.⁸

⁶ For scholarship on Second-Wave Feminism see Benita Roth, *Separate Roads to Feminism: Black, Chicana, and White Feminists Movements in America's Second Wave* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Linda K. Kerber, "I Was Appalled: The Invisible Antecedents of Second-Wave Feminism," *Journal of Women's History* 14 no. 2 (2002): 90-101; Becky Thompson, "Multiracial Feminism: Recasting the Chronology of Second Wave," *Feminist Studies* 28 no. 2 (2002):337-360; Barbara Ryan, "Ideological Purity and Feminism: The US Women's Movement From 1966 to 1975," *Gender and Society* 3 no. 2 (1989):239-257.

⁷ Rosalyn Baxandall and Linda Gordon, eds., *Dear Sisters: Dispatches from the Women's Liberation Movement* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 22.

⁸ For literature on the issues of image and stereotypes of African American women during Second Wave feminism see Lauri Umansky, *Motherhood Reconceived: feminism and the legacies of the sixties* (New York: New York University Press, 1996); Susan Lynn, "Gender and Progressive Politics: A Bridge to Social Activism of the 1960s," in *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994); Gloria T. Hull, Patricia B. Scott, and Barbara Smith, eds., *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies* (New York: The Feminist Press, 1982); Bell Hooks, *Ain't I A Woman: black women and feminism* (Boston: South End Press, 1982).

The Need for a Separate Movement

Feminist activists organize around shared personal experiences, understanding that they can relate life experiences with one another in hopes of achieving a common goal. According to historian Barbara Ryan, “The varieties of appearances, styles, interactional patterns, and group structures were reflections of the women leaders, who organized in ways in which they were most familiar.”⁹ This statement places the need for a separate black feminist movement into context. The experiences of white women during the 1950s and beyond were not the same as black women. While white women experienced gender-based discrimination, black women experienced discrimination based upon race, gender, class, and economic.¹⁰ As one black woman involved in the women’s movement so poignantly states, “All the problems and issues which feminism raises are valid and important. It simply does not give me any answers for correct behavior in my own life.”¹¹ The agendas of these women were rather different and therefore could not be explored together.

The 1950s brought upon a subordination of both white and black women. In order to pursue social standards of the “ideal” woman, black women not only had to deal with the discrimination due to such issues as the Jim Crow laws, but now societal pressures to live up to the “white” standard. Bell Hooks, a historian and feminists states, “The 50s socialization of black women assume a more subordinate role in relation to black men occurred as part of an overall effort in the US to brainwash women so as to reverse he effects of World War II.”¹² The pursuit of ideal femininity amongst black women came with heavy discrimination. The overall economic status of the African American race was significantly lower than that of whites in the 1950s. Therefore black women had to work in order to help provide for their families. This projected a negative stereotype both on black women as being “masculine” and black men as “failed” men.¹³ This negative stereotype ushered in the discrimination black women faced both in white society and black masculine society.

The role of the white woman during this time provided idealized standards and set an example to all black women, leaving many women to feel inadequate. The Third World Women’s Alliance (TWWA) cited the failure of the black

⁹ Barbara Ryan, “Ideological Purity and Feminism: The U.S. Women’s movement from 1966 to 1975,” *Gender and Society* 3 no. 2 (1989): 239-257.

¹⁰ Wini Breines, “What’s Love Got to Do with It? White Women, Black Women, and Feminism in the Movement Years,” *Signs*, 27 no.4 (Summer, 2002): 1095-1133.

¹¹ Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, eds., *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (New York: Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, 1981), 68.

¹² Hooks, *Ain’t I A Woman*, 177.

¹³ Hooks, *Ain’t I A Woman*, 178.

movement to resolve and deal with the contradictions in its own movement as the cause for the politicizing black women.¹⁴ In authorizing the Black Women's Manifesto (1970), TWWA emphasized the oppression and submissiveness that black women felt at this time. "The black woman has been made to feel ashamed of her strength," it notes, "and so to redeem herself she has adopted from whites the belief that superiority and dominance of the male is most 'natural' and 'normal' relationship. She consequently believes that black women out to be suppressed in order to attain that 'natural balance.'"¹⁵ These social ideals marked an increased awareness amongst black women to the differences in their struggles as compared to their white female counterparts. Although gender united them, discrimination divided them.

The line separating a black woman's personal life and views soon became the forefront of a political battle. This battle was inevitable seeing that the personal lives of black women were not personal at all as they were spread all over society. Feminist, Mitsuye Yamada explores this very connection in her writing "Asian Pacific American Women and Feminism." Although Yamada is not African American, her words ring true to the feelings of black women at this time. "These are connections we expected our white sisters to see... They should be able to see that political views held by a woman of color are often misconstrued as being personal rather than ideological. Views critical of the system held by a person in an 'out group' are often seen as expressions of personal angers against dominant society."¹⁶ It was often that ideals held by women of color were taken as personal notions and therefore attacked for their lack of structure. Perhaps one of the biggest blockades in a unified movement was the lack of understanding that society had for issues raised by women of color.

Audre Lorde, a prominent black feminist discussed the lack of understanding and communication between black and white women in her open letter to Mary Daly. White feminists often misused their grievance for black women as pity. White women acknowledged their inherent differences, but did little to achieve separation of race and gender. Lorde believed that to "imply... that all women suffer the same oppression simply because we are women, is to loose sight of the many varied tools of patriarchy. It is to ignore how those tools are used by women without awareness against each other."¹⁷ Lorde acknowledges the struggle of all

¹⁴ Duke University Special Collections Library, "Third World Women's Alliance. Black Women's Manifesto," Documents from the Women's Liberation Movement: An Online Archival Collection. Available at <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/wim/blkmanif/> (accessed October 22, 2007).

¹⁵ "Black Woman's Manifesto," <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/wlm/color.html> (accessed October 22, 2007).

¹⁶ Moraga and Anzaldúa, eds., *This Bridge Called My Back*, 74.

¹⁷ Moraga and Anzaldúa, eds., *This Bridge Called My Back*, 95.

women against patriarchy, but also gives way to understanding that the means by which the struggle exists is different. This lack of acknowledgement is what causes this gap and lack of communication. This gap makes it possible for women to turn their backs to one another and become numb to the realities. Lorde notes, “The oppression of women knows no ethnic nor racial boundaries, true, but that does not mean it is identical within those boundaries. . . . For then beyond sisterhood, is still racism.”¹⁸ It is cultural, racial, and social ignorance that drove the women’s movement apart.

The emerging black feminism began a critical analysis of the white woman’s preoccupation with issues that were clearly relevant only to the white middle-class woman. The lack of connection between white feminists and black women was due to a variety of factors. The feminist movement really flourished in the late 1960s. At the same time that the women’s movement was rising, the Black Liberation movement was also escalating. Women were still well involved (although they still remained in the shadows of male leaders) in civil rights and did not want to over shadow the advancement of their race with a separate movement. Women involved in the civil rights movement were afraid to speak out towards their male counterparts because they did not want to take away from the movement. Also, society still had the idea of masculine dominance in civil rights activism therefore ensuring that a woman’s voice was not heard. The black women of the civil rights movement were enraptured in advancing their race as a whole and they unselfishly put their own oppression on the backburner.

This era of movements signified strength in either white women, or black men, but there seemed to be no room left for black women. White females involved in the civil rights movement believed black women should have a voice, but felt that black women simply did not want help from the white women. This is a key point because white women saw their engagement with black women as “help” thus infantilizing Black women. Black feminists did not want help; rather, they wanted equal participation. In 1968, Chude Pam Allen, both a feminist and a civil rights activist, noted that, “We are very aware of the fact that a lot of middle class black women want nothing to do with us because we are white and it is very difficult to see any potential alliance.”¹⁹ Jo Freeman, another white feminist, was outraged by the fact that black women felt no connection to the woman’s movement and stated, “Our contacts with minority

¹⁸ Moraga and Anzaldúa, eds., *This Bridge Called My Back*, 97.

¹⁹ Winifred Breines, *The Trouble Between Us: An Uneasy History of White and Black Women in the Feminist Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 80.

women were few, despite our roots in the Civil Rights Movement... The message white women got from black activists was to stay away; our presence, our ideas, our whiteness was oppressive.”²⁰ Although this white feminist felt a connection to the black women, it was unlikely that a white middle class woman could relate to the oppression faced by black women, let alone lower class black women. The oppression was different. Yes, gender based oppression could be seen as a means of unity, but these white women represented the ideal race in the eyes of society. Women such as Freeman seemed to idealize feminism by believing all women should be able to come together and fight oppression as a unified group. This was not possible during the 1960s given the significant stratification that existed between not only blacks and whites as a race and class, but black women and white women.

Oppression was entangled in a long history of racial stratification. Black women know of the oppression they face whereas white women see it. Black feminist Jo Carillo expresses such an emotion in her poem “And When You Leave, Take Your Pictures With You.” She writes, “Our white sisters, radical friends, love to own pictures of us, sitting at a factory machine, wielding a machete... Our white sisters, radical friends, should think again.”²¹ Many black women and black feminist alike felt as though white women felt guilty for the past and therefore felt the need to connect themselves with black women in a united front. This poem by Jo Carillo expresses the notion that the only emotion white women could feel is empathy through pictures. There simply was no real connection.

This oppression ran deep within in the movement, so deep that black women felt a lack of loyalty amongst their white “sisters.” One black feminist states, “I left the women’s movement utterly drained. I have no interest in returning. My dreams of crossing barriers to true understandings were false... Perhaps white women are so rarely loyal because they do not have to be. There are thousands of them... gives us what we want now... I don’t understand those who turned away from me.”²² In a sea of women trying to obtain equality, black women felt swallowed by the white masses and this racism whether perceived or real, forged a barrier that could not be crossed nor united.

Non-white feminists and their actions are often described as “third world” players, a term inherently racist for its depiction of poverty, destitution, and helplessness. These descriptions then translated to black women with society viewing these women as helpless, poor, unintelligent, and socially subordinate.

²⁰ Breines, *The Trouble Between Us*, 80.

²¹ Moraga and Anzaldúa, eds., *This Bridge Called My Back*, 63.

²² Moraga and Anzaldúa, eds., *This Bridge Called My Back*, 69-70.

During this time black women's writings reflect challenging these ideals. Doris Davenport, a black feminist, wrote, "The Pathology of Racism: A Conversation with Third World Wimmin" which digs deep into the question of why racism exists in a movement that is supposed to be about women, not about color. "The fact is, the word 'racism' is too simplistic, too general, and too easy. You can use the word and not say that much, unless the term is explained or clarified. Once that happens, racism looks more like a psychological problem (or pathological aberration) than an issue of skin color."²³ Inferiority and subordination are psychological issues, differences made by actions on an ideology. Davenport states, "We experience white feminists and their organizations as elitist, crudely insensitive, and condescending... It is also apparent that white feminists still perceive us as the 'Other,' based on a menial or sexual image... and more oppressed, but less political than they are."²⁴ Davenport explores why white women remain ignorant to their racist complicity:

My experiences with white feminists prevent me from seeing dialogue as anything but naïve beginning. I honestly see our trying to 'break into' the white feminist movement as almost equivalent to the old, outdated philosophy of integration and assimilation. It is time we stopped this approach. We know we have no desire to be white. On the other hand, we know we have some valid concerns and goals that white feminists overlook. By now, in fact, a few of their organizations are as rigid... as any other 'established' institution... When we *do* act on our power and potential, there will be a *real* feminist movement in this country, one that will finally include all wimmin.²⁵

White feminists may have chosen to ignore the inherent racist struggles of their black counterparts within the movement, but the fact remains that they did exist. The movements' racism carried racist ideologies that have existed ever since the integration of white and black cultures. Although white women set out to create this mass organization of women despite their color, it is the psychological effects of history that again repeated itself during this movement. As these women bonded together to fight inherent racism they formed a materialistic community bounded by history.

²³ Moraga and Anzaldúa, eds., *This Bridge Called My Back*, 85-86.

²⁴ Moraga and Anzaldúa, eds., *This Bridge Called My Back*, 86.

²⁵ Moraga and Anzaldúa, eds., *This Bridge Called My Back* 90.

The "Other" Mothers

In 1955, liberal democrat Adlai Stevenson promoted the ideals of motherhood to the graduating class at Smith College. He spoke of confining women to their home in hopes that "in her home a vision of the meaning of life and freedom...help her husband find values that will give purpose to his specialized daily chores."²⁶ Stevenson in 1955 never intended for his statement to drive women out of the house and use their sense of motherhood as a sense of power and strength, yet black women did just this during the 1960s and 70s. Historian Ruth Feldstein explores the definitions of motherhood and how they were to be played out to discrepancies in American society, noting "Both racists and antiracists, conservatives and liberals invoked, constructed, and relied on meanings of motherhood to formulate their views..."²⁷ Black women time and time again challenged these white notions of motherhood and used these challenges to advance their stand against gender and race based oppression.

The idea of motherhood represents two very different notions in comparing them in black and white culture. Author Patricia Collins writes, "Historically, the concept of motherhood has been of central importance in the philosophies of people of African descent."²⁸ White middle-class women began recognizing their role in the family as a lonely and thankless job; however, black females refused to take the responsibilities of family as a burden. For black women there was a historical meaning to motherhood, one that certainly would not be shattered by the images of society. The image of motherhood was used through out the women's movement as a means for political action. The ideas of black motherhood emanating from African American communities have been very different as compared to others. "Some women view motherhood as a truly burdensome condition that stifles their creativity, exploits their labor, and makes them partners in their own oppression. Others see motherhood as providing a base for self-actualization, status in the black community, and a catalyst for social activism."²⁹ For black women motherhood represented a connection with one another, children, and community. It was not simply paternal kin that mattered it was also the notion of "fictive" kin.

These black women were not simply fighting for the rights of their children and themselves, but for the black community as a whole. This bond of

²⁶ Ruth Feldstein, "I Wanted the Whole World to See: Race, Gender, and Constructions of Motherhood in the Death of Emmett Till," in *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 264.

²⁷ Feldstein, "I Wanted the Whole World to See," 265.

²⁸ Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2000), 174.

²⁹ Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 180.

community is what is challenged and stereotyped in the black women's movement. Collins explains, "By seeing the larger *community* as responsible for children and by giving other mothers and other nonparents "rights" in child rearing, those African Americans who endorse these values challenge prevailing capitalist property relations."³⁰ White society did not comprehend the importance behind fictive kin to black survival. This resiliency among black women to take responsibility for black children illustrated how the African American understanding of family and motherhood helped them collectively cope with and ultimately resist oppression.³¹ The reason that black women used motherhood as a means of political activism was because of its large metaphor for community.

Black women understood that motherhood was a symbol of power and in its deepest notion was universal through all race lines. By the late 1960s "debates within and beyond the African American community about an alleged black "matriarchy" led to many black women activists to articulate a multilayered feminist position that...viewed motherhood as a source of strength and solidarity."³² The strength came from the notion that they were not simply fighting for *their* rights, but for the rights of *all* black women, and their children. Black women in times of familial crisis have proven to be strong willed leaders. Many women have felt defeated in society's intimidation of black matriarchy. Doris Wright, a black feminist and co-founder of the National Black Feminist Organization, describes this notion in her writing "Angry Notes from a Black Feminist." She states, "They have also succeeded in intimidating some Black women into anxious remorse over the fact when Sam ran out and left them with the brood they had the courage and the moral strength to become the family's breadwinner. Black women have proven...they are capable leaders."³³ The strength of these women and their will to carry on directly translated from their roles as mothers to their roles as feminists.

A critical essay written by Patricia Haden, Donna Middleton, and Patricia Robinson entitled "A Historical and Critical Essay for Black Women" written in 1969-70 reaffirmed black women's power as mothers. For black women to create a black revolution it is necessary for them to "take a look at herself, not just individually and collectively, but historically."³⁴ A part of historical reflection is the notion of motherhood; it is ingrained in their culture and

³⁰ Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 182.

³¹ Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 183.

³² Umansky, *Motherhood Reconcived*, 77.

³³ Baxandall and Gordon, eds., *Dear Sisters*, 37.

³⁴ Baxandall and Gordon, eds., *Dear Sisters*, 93.

therefore was used to promote strength within the movement. As so cleverly pointed out in their essay Patricia Haden, Donna Middleton, and Patricia Robinson explore black motherhood as a building block to which all black revolutions have taken place. "It is important for black women to remind themselves occasionally that no black man gets born unless we permit it- even after we open our legs. That is the first, simple step to understanding the power that we have," they go on to say, "The second is that all children belong to women because only we know who the mother is. As to who the father is-well, we can decide that too-any man we choose to say it is, and that neither the child nor MAN was made by God."³⁵ What a powerful statement made by such empowered women. Whatever patriarchy may exist in society it must be recognized that without a woman these men who hold such power would not exist. If it were not for motherhood there would be no children to be revolutionaries. It is from one innate gift that the world is able to progress, the gift of motherhood. As these women banded together under a materialistic system, the need to gain a national backing emerged. It is one thing to have the support of a community, and another of other black women around the country.

The National Black Feminist Organization

The National Black Feminist Organization was first organized and created in New York in the year 1973 by Margaret Sloan and Eleanor Holmes Norton in reaction to a proposed regional black feminist conference.³⁶ Sloan and Norton believed a conference would simply not gain the amount of national attention needed to start a movement as would creating specific chapters nationwide. The women at this conference made a nationwide announcement that chapters of the NBFO would be created in such cities as San Francisco, Cleveland, and Chicago.

The NBFO was created in order to respond to the black women's relationship to the white dominated Second Wave Feminist Movement. Black feminists disliked the notion that any black woman involved in this "separate" movement was seen as "selling out, dividing the race, and an assortment of nonsensical epithets."³⁷ The women who gathered in the spring of 1973 and formed the NBFO elected Sloan as their president of the organization. According to Margaret Sloan, "by organizing our needs as Black women, we are making sure that we won't be left out... which was what was appearing to be

³⁵ Baxandall and Gordon, eds., *Dear Sisters*, 95.

³⁶ Kimberly Springer, *Living for the Revolution: Black Feminist Organizations, 1968-1980* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 51.

³⁷ Springer, *Living for the Revolution*, 186.

happening in both the Black liberation and the women's liberation movements."³⁸ Black women organized to advocate on their own behalf rather than struggle constantly with the racism within predominately white feminist group.³⁹ In a statement of purpose the NFBO states, "As Black Feminists we realized the need to establish ourselves as an independent Black Feminist organization. Our aboveground presence will lend enormous credibility to the current Women's Liberation Movement... We will continue to remind the Black Liberation Movement that there can't be liberation for half the race..."

The attendance held women who ranged in age from eighteen to fifty-five. The first meeting of the NBFO was enough for people to realize that black women were ready to let their voices ring loud.⁴⁰

This meeting represented a move away from the shadows of male domination in the civil rights movement, and white females in the woman's movement. Two women in attendance, Deborah Singletary and Eugenia Wilshire, expressed anticipation and hope that there was finally a group in which the needs and goals of black women can be achieved. Singletary stated, "I'm not even sure I even thought about feminism before or thought about myself as a feminist, but when I heard that black feminists were convening, then I knew that that was where I belonged and I went to that first meeting."⁴¹ Women such as Singletary may have never considered themselves feminists at first glance, but it was this organization that allowed them to see they indeed were. Eugenia Wilshire also shared a sense of belonging when in attendance, "I didn't even know how long the organization had existed or not, but [the flyer] just said there was a meeting in a church and it was black feminists and it gave me the time and it was in my neighborhood and I said, 'That's for me.' So I went."⁴² I was clearer now than ever that these women could come together and recognize that they were not alone.

The NBFO served to focus on the challenges of black women who were left out of both the women's movement and the civil rights movement. The creation of the NBFO caused the invisible to have a

³⁸ Duchess Harris, "From the Kennedy Commission to the Combahee Collective," in *Sisters in the Struggle: African American Women in the Civil Right-Black Power Movement* (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 288.

³⁹ Umansky, *Motherhood Reconceived*, 108.

⁴⁰ Springer, *Living for the Revolution*, 53.

⁴¹ Springer, *Living for the Revolution*, 53.

⁴² Springer, *Living for the Revolution*, 52.

voice. Those who thought they were alone in their feminist thoughts could now have a haven in which they felt secure. Brenda Eichelberger, a founding member of the NBFO's Chicago chapter, shows black women's excitement for a feminist organization:

I really got involved in women's liberation by reading about the National Black Feminist Organization in the May, 1974, MS Magazine. Before reading that article, I didn't know any other black woman felt the way that I did about feminism. I knew white women who were my friends, but they didn't have the added oppression of race. A lot of black groups were macho. I couldn't completely identify with any group. Anyway, all I need to know was that one woman anywhere felt like I did. I got busy organizing the National Black Feminist Chapter in Chicago.⁴³

It was clear that the NBFO had appeal to black women on a national level. Deborah Gray White, another national leader of the NBFO, stated the NBFO had "more than any organization in the century...launched a frontal assault on sexism and racism."⁴⁴ It must also be noted the NBFO's first conference in New York was attended by four hundred women from a range of class backgrounds.⁴⁵ The attendance signified that black feminism appealed and reached all levels. The purpose of the conference was for the organizations leaders to let those in attendance know that feminism was relevant to their lives and that the National Black Feminist Organization would strengthen their position in society.⁴⁶ Organizers handled issues of welfare, daycare, employment discrimination, reproductive rights, rape and sexual orientation, but highlighted issues of economic survival and working class women.

The NBFO, influenced by Congress on Racial Equality and Women's Action Alliance, held nine core members, and an estimated two-thousand members.⁴⁷ Its members held a strong will and invested tremendous energy to its success, which slowly began to seep into the cracks of other organizations. Yet, in 1975 the NBFO began its decline, only two years after its positive, encouraging, and hopeful beginning.

⁴³ Chicago Women's Liberation Union, "Herstory Project, A Black Woman's View of Women's Liberation," <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/wlm/color.html> (accessed November 2, 2007).

⁴⁴ Becky Thompson, "Multiracial Feminism: Recasting the Chronology of Second Wave." *Feminist Studies* 28(2) (2002): 337-360.

⁴⁵ Thompson, "Multiracial Feminism", 337-360.

⁴⁶ Breines, *The Trouble Between Us*, 120.

⁴⁷ Springer, *Living for the Revolution*, 66.

The Decline of the National Black Feminist Organization

Although the NBFO seemed like a cohesive organization in which black women could gather in order to achieve their goals, this notion was not shared by all members. Michelle Wallace (a NFBO member since 1973) reflected on her concerns with the NBFO from the very beginning: “We voted to become an organization, The National Black Feminist Organization, and Margaret Sloan was voted chairman which was probably our first mistake...as chairman ruled out the possibility of NBFO having mass appeal though that was the goal...”⁴⁸ An organization built on a whim of strong emotion during a conference needs structure and fast organization. The overwhelming response that Margaret Sloan received the day after the announcement was simply too much for any type of successful structure to take place. There were too many black feminists with different agendas in order to form one cohesive union. “The NBFO’s founding members faced the tasks of simultaneously defining the organization’s agenda, orienting women in other cities ...when an array of black women, all with differing definitions of black feminist activism, joined the organization, the NBFO’s leadership was unprepared to effectively meet those demands.”⁴⁹ As the demands grew bigger the leadership struggled.

Members were not oblivious to the struggles and often inconsistency within the NBFO. Wallace accounted for her feelings of confusion and frustration in her article “On the National Black Feminist Organization,” written in 1978: “After a while it became an embarrassment to try to answer the question ‘what does the NBFO do?’ ...It is very possible that the NBFO was not meant to happen when it did.”⁵⁰ When the NBFO was developed in 1973, the women’s movement was still finding their identity, so needless to say it was even more difficult for black feminists to find their identity both within and outside of the movement as well. Women looking to join the organization, or any organization faced the question of what feminism meant to them. They worried that if they called their organization feminist they would be labeled in the radical spectrum of the woman’s movement and therefore would be disregarded. “At an earlier meeting there was even a lengthy discussion about whether or not to call the organization feminist,” Wallace goes on to explore how the NBFO lacked significant standing, “I think the NBFO was willed into existence by white

⁴⁸ Michelle Wallace, “On the National Black Feminist Organization,” in *Feminist Revolution*. Random House, 1978. Available from Duke University Special Collections Library <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/wim/fem/wallace.html> (accessed October 22, 2007).

⁴⁹ Springer, *Living for the Revolution*, 68.

⁵⁰ Michelle Wallace, “On the National Black Feminist Organization,” <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/wim/fem/wallace.html> (accessed October 22, 2007).

feminists who got tired of being asked ‘where are all the black women?’⁵¹ These women who seemed on the surface to have a combined front, ultimately struggled to find a collective identity.

Black women in the movement struggled to find their identity as a woman of color and as a female. They faced gender and racial oppression by black and white men, as well as white women. Black women were being consumed by the masses and somewhere along the lines they could not seem to find their own identity. The argument of whether or not to align with feminism remained a constant question. It was this question that was detrimental to the momentum of the black feminist movement.⁵² The NBFO simply could not answer the question of identity and therefore struggled to exist. It opened its membership to “any black woman of African descent who accepts feminism as the organizing priority for the NBFO and who participates in the program.”⁵³ Feminism meant a chance to further black women as a whole. It was an opportunity for the rest of society to acknowledge, whether they wanted to or not, the double-faced oppression of black women. The NBFO opened its doors to all black women and in turn provided a vague purpose.

Women such as Michelle Wallace felt that the disorganization within NBFO was a sign that the black women’s movement simply could not move forward. Wallace recalls her feelings about the NBFO when she states, “I’m not really sure but I do know that despite a sizeable number of black feminists who have contributed much to the leadership of the Women’s Movement, there is no Black Women’s Movement and it appears there won’t be for some time.”⁵⁴ Black feminists had come together in 1973, and out of a dream formed a national organization, the National Black Feminist Organization. Was this just a dream? Could these women really pull together and create this national movement that brought the plight of third world women to the forefront of American society? Was American society ready and willing at this time to accept strong black women? NBFO member Eugenia Wilshire remembers her group, “What we did have going for us is that we were dreamers. We really believed in what we were doing and that it was possible and that things could change and would change. And there was really no doubt about that, and I think that’s what’s different...I don’t think there are dreamers anymore.”⁵⁵ The

⁵¹ Wallace, “On the National Black Feminist Organization,” <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/wim/fem/wallace.html> (accessed October 22, 2007).

⁵² Springer, *Living for the Revolution*, 80.

⁵³ Springer, *Living for the Revolution*, 80.

⁵⁴ Wallace, “On the National Black Feminist Organization,” <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/wim/fem/wallace.html> (accessed October 22, 2007).

⁵⁵ Springer, *Living for the Revolution*, 178-9.

dreamers of Eugenia Wilshire may have seen defeat in the decline of the NBFO; however, the will never went away.

Despite the decline of the NBFO in 1975 and into its cease of existence, the voices of these women still remained dominate. The black feminists who fought so hard in the 1960s and even more so in the 70s, served as examples and stepping stones for the next generation of black American feminists. Although members of the NBFO may have seen their organization as a failure at the time, it certainly was no failure at all. The NBFO represents a presence of strong black women who were willing to risk criticism in the face of American society in order to stand up for issues regarding racial and gender justice. They showed that although there was a women's movement there was not a universal women's movement. It was segregated in many factors and issues, and simply was not geared towards the black female population. Black women needed a separate movement. They needed to depend on one another instead of staying in the shadows of white women. The NBFO may have fallen apart, but the will of black feminists never did.

The Black Feminist Movement was never about creating an upsurge against the other movements surrounding it; rather it was to make both men and women aware that if society was going to change it needed to include black women as well. Change does not happen excluding any one particular group or person; instead it happens when people are ready to acknowledge, accept, and improve upon the differences within. It is with the words of poet Nikki Giovanni in her poem "Revolutionary Dreams" that the emotions of black feminists are truly captured:

i used to dream militant/ dreams of taking/ over
america to show/ these white folks how it should be
done/ i used to dream radical dreams/of blowing
everyone away with my perceptive powers/ of correct
analysis/ i even used to think i'd be the one/ to stop the
riot and negotiate the peace/ then i awoke and dug/ that
if i dreamed natural / dreams of being a natural/ woman
doing what a woman / does when she's natural/ i would
have a revolution⁵⁶

Giovanni's poem acknowledges the limitations that many black women feel. Society plagued Black women as inferior. If the Black women protested,

⁵⁶ Giovanni, "Revolutionary Dreams," Available on <http://members.tripod.com/%7ERaincloud771/poetry/nikki/alligotta.htm> (accessed November 24, 2007).

their actions were seen as militant, if they did not they were seen as weak by other women. Black feminists, unlike white feminists, understood the natural power that women had. To black women, the idea of womanhood was represented by an image of motherhood, family, independence, and strength. Women did not need to attach themselves to men in order to attain greatness; women were a power of their own. Women such as Giovanni realized that if she did what was natural, what a woman represents at her rawness, then and only then would she have a revolution.

A revolution does not need to be some militant public action. It can be a revolution of the mind and thought. The Black Feminist Movement represents a revolution in which non-white women were able to come together and address the social issues that the country had long ignored. Black women were no longer afraid to step out from the civil rights movement and declare a voice of their own.

Excluded into Existence: Building a Mizrahi Identity out of Ashkenazi Memories

By Kate Pole

The history of Israel is too often framed in the larger context of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Zionist Jews asserted a historical and religious claim to the land of Palestine, which brought them into direct contact with the people already living there. Over time, the Zionists successfully transferred their predominately Muslim neighbors out and their Zionist brethren in. Somewhere in between, Western powers recognized the Zionist claim to Israel, thereby validating its existence. Thus was born the ubiquitous question, “Does Israel have the right to exist?” The answer constitutes the bulk of Israeli historiography. But the fact remains Israel *does* exist and seems likely to exist for some time to come. Therefore, perhaps a more valuable question is, “How did the manner in which Israel came to exist impact the collective identity of its inhabitants?”

I examine how Labor Zionists established hegemony over the Israeli state-building project and in the process, deliberately excluded Arab Jews from both the Yishuv (pre-Israeli Palestine) and early Israeli collective memory. More specifically, Zionist “pioneering” in the Yishuv and “universal” Jewish suffering in the Holocaust are both integral components of Israeli identity and therefore, are part of full membership into Israeli society. I intend to demonstrate that Ashkenazi (European Jewish) Labor Zionism, as a by-product of European nationalism, is inherently Orientalist; therefore, its adherents intentionally subordinated Arab Jews by constructing these two memories as exclusively Ashkenazi-Zionist experiences. Labor Zionist leaders did this, first, by writing Arab Jews *out of* Yishuv history and second, by writing the Holocaust *into* Ashkenazi-Israeli history. Thus in the 1950s, when a significant number of Arab Jews began emigrating to Israel as a result of the newly manufactured Arab-Israeli conflict, Ashkenazi Zionists tried to force them to surrender their Arab identity and assimilate as Israelis. Forced to identify with either the Judaism of the Labor Ashkenazim or the Arabness of the Palestinians, the political and economic advantages of Ashkenazi hegemony persuaded many Arab Jews to embrace an Israeli identity. But because Labor Zionists had excluded them from the collective memories of Yishuv pioneering and the Holocaust, the processes of assimilation never entirely removed the stigma of their Arab origins and they were constructed as a second-class citizenry. But this manufactured identity crisis inspired a new, self-aware, “imagined community” of Arab Jews—

namely, the Mizrahim.¹ The existence of the Mizrahim did not gain widespread recognition until the 1990s—a period beyond the scope of this paper—but the initial Labor Zionist construction of these two memories provided the foundations of the Mizrahi identity.

First it must be acknowledged that the Ashkenazi Jews did suffer at the hands of European Gentiles for centuries. From the “People’s Crusade” of the eleventh century to the Spanish Inquisition of Ferdinand and Isabella to the ghettos of the Third Reich, Ashkenazi history in Europe is riddled with discrimination and oppression. In fact, the ubiquity of “Anti-Semitism rendered Jews an inassimilable ‘other,’” which in turn created a collective Ashkenazi identification with suffering—in essence, an “imagined community” of oppressed Ashkenazim.² Under constant threat of anti-Semitic assaults, a number of Ashkenazim sought to transform their fear and anguish into political activism and developed modern Zionism in the late nineteenth century. The great paradox of modern Zionism, however, is that in the process of building Israel and a Zionist identity, its adherents excluded non-Ashkenazi Jews from full Zionist membership. Consequently, this process unified the non-Ashkenazim in their “Otherness,” just as the European Gentiles had done to the Ashkenazim in prior centuries. This happened for two reasons: first, the Ashkenazi Zionists accepted their own essentialized identity and second, their ideology was inherently Orientalist.

To fully understand this, one must remember that Orientalism is a discourse of power. European scholars and travelers observed, studied, collected, and wrote “exclusively academic matter” about the Orient, regardless of the fact that many of these alleged scholars had no personal experience with it or its people.³ Nonetheless, the sheer accumulation of this constructed knowledge authenticated it and allowed the Occident to assert its power over the Orient. As Edward Said explains, “knowledge of subject races or Orientals is what makes their management easy and profitable; knowledge gives power, more power requires more knowledge and so on in an increasingly profitable dialectic of information and control.”⁴ The Ashkenazim suffered a similar Anti-Semitic conversion in the Christian discourse of power, but that made them no less susceptible to Orientalist discourse. For example, beginning in the late eighteenth century, the Haskala, or

¹ The concept of “imagined community” is from Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983). It will be discussed in further detail later in this paper.

² James L. Gelvin, *Israel-Palestine Conflict: One Hundred Years of War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 41.

³ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 27.

⁴ Said, *Orientalism*, 36.

Jewish Enlightenment, promoted science and reason in the name of human progress, so its adherents dedicated their studies to Occidental languages and literature in hopes of furthering Jewish emancipation. But keeping in mind that Orientalism is an “intellectual matter,” the Haskala, an intellectual movement, also exposed the Ashkenazim to Orientalist ideologies.⁵ Arguably then, the beginning of the Haskala marked the beginning of Zionism as a modern Orientalist discourse. The Zionists’ accepted their own Anti-Semitic “Otherness,” translated it into a European nationalist narrative, and once in Palestine, “hijacked” the ethnic identities of non-Ashkenazi Jews in order to create a hegemonic discourse.⁶ In this way, Zionism is paradoxically a reaction to and a product of Orientalism.

This dialectic is discernible in two ways: the formation of Ashkenazi Zionism as a type of European nationalism and the simultaneous construction of the new Mizrahim. Ashkenazi intellectuals first encountered nationalism as one of the Orientalist ideologies of the Haskala. In order to become part of the collective, Ashkenazi consciousness, however, a demographic shift had to occur. In the first half of the nineteenth century, approximately 90 percent of the world’s Jews lived in Europe, and 75 percent of those lived in the Russian Pale of Settlement.⁷ Aside from political and economic disenfranchisement, the Russian shtetl Jews were subject to the constant threat of anti-Semitic violence. As Golda Meir, later prime minister of Israel, recalled, “[My family] lived then on the first floor of a small house in Kiev, and I can still recall distinctly hearing about a pogrom that was to descend on us. . . [I remember] the rabble that used to surge through town, brandishing knives and huge sticks, screaming ‘Christ killers’ as they looked for Jews, . . . [wanting] to do terrible things to me and to my family.”⁸

The ubiquity of anti-Semitic violence, especially the 1881 and 1882 pogroms, served as the basis of modern Zionism’s identification with universal suffering. Coupled with the ongoing abatement of Jewish rights, these pogroms forced many Russian Jews to flee to urban areas, where they were undoubtedly introduced to the tenets and practices of European nationalism. Moreover, this persecution-based emigration applied to the larger Ashkenazi population, 75 percent of whom were urbanized by 1929.⁹

⁵ “Intellectual matter” is from Said, *Orientalism*, 27. The Haskala-Zionist connection is from Gelvin, *Israel-Palestine Conflict*, 48.

⁶ Ella Shohat, “The Invention of the Mizrahim,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 29, no. 1 (Autumn 1999): 6, *JSTOR*.<http://www.jstor.org>.

⁷ Gelvin, *Israel-Palestine Conflict*, 38.

⁸ Golda Meir quoted in Ronald Takaki, *A Different Mirror: A History of Multi-Cultural America* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1993), 278.

⁹ Gelvin, *Israel-Palestine Conflict*, 42.

Theodor Herzl, the founder of modern Zionism, embodied this urbanized enlightenment, his own family having moved to Vienna “at a time when that city seemed to promise so much to . . . Jews who wished to assimilate into mainstream European society and culture.”¹⁰ Herzl took advantage of this liberal atmosphere and was educated in both law and journalism, where he was undoubtedly inundated with nationalist ideology. He simply needed a taste of Jewish suffering to cement his ideas on Jewish nationalism, which he found in the Parisian “Dreyfus Affair.” In 1894, Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish army captain, was wrongly convicted of espionage simply because he was “a successful Jew.”¹¹ Disillusioned that Jewish emancipation had failed even in an enlightened nation like France, Herzl concluded that genuine emancipation could only be achieved in a separate and autonomous Jewish homeland. Herzl asserted, “[O]ur enemies have made us one in our despite . . . Distress binds us together, and thus united, we suddenly discover our strength. Yes, we are strong enough to form a state, and a model state.”¹² Thus, a secular nationalism based on religious affiliation was born—born out of an Orientalist discourse and unto an Ashkenazi population.

The most visible evidence of Zionism’s Orientalist nature is its binary lexicon. More specifically, if Ashkenazi Zionism is the Jewish “Other” to European nationalism, then the Sephardi Jew is the Oriental “Other” to the Ashkenazi Jew. Technically speaking, ‘Sephardi’ simply refers to “Jews of Spain who retained their Spanishness even outside of Iberia—for example, in Turkey, Bulgaria, Egypt, and Morocco.”¹³ But over time, their Spanish ancestry was subsumed into “a kind of transregional geocultural Jewish space, [that stretched] from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean.” Hence, the term became an essentialized Zionist label for all non-Ashkenazi Jews outside of the future Israel.¹⁴ Like any proper Orientalist idiom, this was not a term the very diverse groups within the ‘Sephardic’ population used for themselves. In an Orientalist discourse, “Truth . . . becomes a function of learned judgment, not of the material itself, which in time seems to own even its own existence to the Orientalist.”¹⁵ Hence, the “truth” of Jewish ethnicity—Moroccan, Islamic, Levantine, Yemenite, and Iraqi (among other) distinctions—became simply “Sephardim.”

¹⁰ Gelvin, *Israel-Palestine Conflict*, 49.

¹¹ Gelvin, *Israel-Palestine Conflict*, 50. For more information on the Dreyfus Affair see Jean-Denis Bredin, *The Affair: The Case of Alfred Dreyfus* trans. by Jeffrey Mehlmén (New York: G. Braziller, 1986).

¹² Theodor Herzl quoted in Gelvin, *Israel-Palestine Conflict*, 51.

¹³ Ella Shohat, “Rupture and Return: Zionist Discourse and the Study of Arab Jews,” *Social Text* 21, no. 2 (2003): 3, [http:// www.ebscohost.edu](http://www.ebscohost.edu).

¹⁴ Shohat, “Rupture and Return,” 3.

¹⁵ Said, *Orientalism*, 67.

But in this process, the Zionists helped create the Mizrahim, another category of Jews. Mizrahim simply means “Easterners,” but as of the 1990s, it has come to replace “Sephardim” to describe Jews of the East.¹⁶ To be sure, “Mizrahim” also subordinates a wealth of Jewish ethnicities into one oversimplified category—primarily, Iraqi, Yemenite, and Moroccan Jews—but the more important point here is that the term is not an Orientalist one. The label is widely embraced by Arab Jews to deliberately “[evoke] the specific experience of the non-Ashkenazi Jews in Israel.”¹⁷ In this way, there is a connotation of Mizrahi group consciousness and Ashkenazi opposition. The word “Mizrahim” took on some of the resistant quality of the black/white discourse established by the Black Panther movement in the early 1970s, itself a proud reversal of the Ashkenazi racist epithet *schwartzte khayes* (Yiddish for ‘black animals’) and an allusion to the black liberation movement in the United States.¹⁸ “Sephardim,” on the other hand, has a hierarchical, Ashkenazi connotation; it marks the “norm of ‘Ashkenaziness’ or Euro-Israeli ‘Sabraness’ against the inferior ‘Otherness’ of the Sephardim.”¹⁹ In essence, by embracing the term “Mizrahim,” Arab Jews have begun to challenge the Ashkenazi discourse of power.

Nonetheless, it must be remembered that this “imagined community” of Mizrahim could not exist without Zionism. As Benedict Anderson has explained, an “imagined community” develops out of the historical processes of modernity—in this case, Israeli state-building—and the subsequent immobilization of certain groups’ social power.²⁰ Therefore, it is important to understand how Ashkenazi Zionism established economic, political, and social hegemony in Israel. It is likewise important to understand how this institutionalization created privileged Ashkenazi-Israelis, who in turn created the fertile environment for an “imagined” Mizrahi community.²¹

Mizrahi “Otherness” is a result of their absence from two quintessential Ashkenazi experiences: the creation of Israel and the European Holocaust. Zionism may be a product of European nationalism, but it is unique because its institutional culmination was outside of Europe. Because of this, a “pioneering” ethos became a central part of the Ashkenazi-Israeli identity. But the Mizrahim are noticeably absent from this part of the Zionist narrative. Likewise, recall that

¹⁶ Shohat, “Invention,” 13.

¹⁷ Shohat, “Invention,” 14.

¹⁸ Shohat, “Invention,” 14.

¹⁹ Shohat, “Invention,” 13.

²⁰ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

²¹ As previously mentioned, “Sephardim” would be a more appropriate term for this period of time, but I will continue to use “Mizrahim” throughout this paper since their construction is my primary focus.

pre-Israeli Zionism was rooted in a “universal” Jewish suffering. Although the 1880s pogroms of the Pale were fading memories for the Ashkenazi “pioneers” of Israel in 1948, the cataclysm of the European Holocaust was central to the state’s creation and, therefore, the Ashkenazi-Israeli identity. But the Mizrahim were also excluded from this tragedy. To be sure, this is not meant to be an affront to the genuine and unforgivable atrocities committed during the Holocaust, but as an integral and politicized piece of the Zionist narrative. Framing it as such is imperative to the Mizrahi construction, and introduces an examination of Zionist state building in Palestine.

Once Theodor Herzl and his followers had defined Zionist membership by an exclusively Jewish pathos, they decided upon Palestine as their logical choice for a Jewish homeland and national revival. The first two periods of the Zionist meta-narrative are Antiquity in Israel and Exile in Diaspora, the former being an archetype of successful Jewish nationalism.²² The anachronism of nationalism aside, Herzl’s Zionists believed that the third period of National Revival should naturally return to the prosperous site of Antiquity—hence, the choice for Palestine. But successfully transplanting Zionism to Palestine required a loyal and significant population of willing emigrants, and that scale of mobilization required Zionist institutionalization.

Therefore, Herzl called for the First Zionist Congress in 1897.²³ The most important product of the Congress was the formation of the World Zionist Organization (WZO), a supposedly global establishment that would encompass, enable, and speak on behalf of all Jews everywhere. But it was entirely an Ashkenazi creation. In fact, the WZO was “not enthralled by the prospect of “tainting” the settlements in Palestine with an infusion of [Mizrahi] Jews,” as is evidenced by ubiquitous references to the Ashkenazi in congressional documents.²⁴ But Ashkenazi-Zionist membership remained meager: “Of the two and a half million Jews who fled the Eastern European “Pale of Settlement” from 1881 to 1917, only a little under forty thousand—one in seventy-five—settled in Palestine.”²⁵ Moreover, Herzl’s brand of political Zionism incorrectly assumed that international fundraising in Occidental countries would be able to pay for the Zionist project. For example, in 1901 the Jewish National Fund (JNF)—the economic arm of the WZO—was “designed to become the

²² Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 32-33.

²³ Gelvin, *Israel-Palestine Conflict*, 52.

²⁴ Ella Shohat, “Sephardim in Israel: Zionism from the Perspective of Its Jewish Victims,” *Social Text* no. 19/20 (Autumn 1988): 15, <http://www.jstor.org>.

²⁵ Bernard Avishai, *The Tragedy of Zionism: How its Revolutionary Past Haunts Israeli Democracy* (New York: Helios Press, 2002), xvi.

‘custodian’, on behalf of the Jewish people, of the land the Zionists [would gain] possession of in Palestine.”²⁶ But JNF funds were dependent on the generosity of an absent Jewish majority scattered across the Occidental globe.²⁷ Not surprisingly, this lack of economic and numerical strength resulted in a mass emigration *out* of Palestine; 90 percent of the Zionists of the Second Aliya (1904 – 1914) eventually left.²⁸ Nonetheless, the Ashkenazim were not yet ready to stoop to Mizrahi recruitment. Instead, Zionists sought a different and stronger type of Ashkenazi cohesion, which required an ideological shift and substantial and reliable funding.

This was accomplished, first, with the formation of the Labor Settlement Movement (LSM, also known as Labor Zionism) and second, with the WZO-JNF alliance. Herzl’s political Zionists of the First Aliya (1882-1903) acquired their land by private means and sought only to sustain their own existence, not to acquire land on behalf of a collective Jewish state. Although the Zionists of the Second Aliya (1904-1914) were labor-oriented, the voluntary fundraising of the JNF only provided them the means to work for their wealthier First Aliya counterparts. As a result, Zionism remained a small and rather stagnant political movement. When the Second Aliya workers came into conflict with indigenous Palestinian labor, however, political Zionist ideology suddenly took on a new socialist mentality. As products of European industrialization, the Second Aliya immigrants had demanded higher wages than their Palestinian counterparts “because they were used to a higher, ‘European’ standard of living.”²⁹ Naturally, the First Aliya immigrants looked to capitalize on cheaper Palestinian labor. After all, their European nationalist character also believed in “the extension of the international economic system throughout the globe and the spread of market relations”—capitalism, to be specific.³⁰ But so too did the European lessons of industrialization include unionism and collective bargaining, ideologies the Second Aliya immigrants tried to employ against their First Aliya counterparts. But as previously mentioned, their underfunded collective mentality was no match for the private wealth of the First Aliya immigrants, so a tiny minority of Jews continued to employ Arab labor. The question remained: How could the First and Second Aliya Ashkenazim economically

²⁶ Ilan Paape, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications Limited, 2007), 17.

²⁷ Samuel Halperin, “Ideology or Philanthropy? The Politics of Zionist Fundraising,” *The Western Political Quarterly* 13, no. 4 (Dec 1960): 951, <http://www.jstor.org>.

²⁸ Gershon Shafir and Yoav Peled, *Being Israeli: The Dynamics of Multiple Citizenship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 42.

²⁹ Shafir and Peled, *Being Israeli*, 39.

³⁰ Gelvin, *Israel-Palestine Conflict*, 36.

co-exist so that the Jewish population in Palestine would continue to grow? Additionally, how could Jewish labor replace Arab labor so as to achieve economic hegemony?

To some Labor Zionists the answer was in the Mizrahi. Although their Arab origins made them inferior to the Ashkenazim, they were at least Jewish. Additionally, non-Jewish Arab labor was absolutely contrary to two of Labor Zionism's central tenets: *Avoda Ivrit* (Hebrew work) and *Avoda Atzmit* (Self-Labor). As Ella Shohat explains, "these twin notions [rooted in the Haskala]. . . [suggest] that a person, and a community, should earn from their own and not from hired labor."³¹ The Second Aliya Ashkenazim had not only failed at the hands of other Ashkenazim, but they had been replaced by non-Jewish labor; this was a double blasphemy. Mizrahim labor offered an immediate solution. Furthermore, since the "Arabness" of the Mizrahim made them "socially primeval," they were "natural workers" with "minimal needs."³² Even better, their Judaism meant Zionists could rest easy that the ideological principles of *Avoda Ivrit* and *Avoda Izmit* were upheld, while the Ashkenazi workers and their "creative" and "idealist" propensities could be put to better use in the upper echelons of Zionist institutions.³³ Hence, 10,000 "young and healthy" Mizrahi Jews were lured to Israel before World War I; however, those people represented only a temporary and miniscule solution to the mass exodus of the Second Aliya Ashkenazim.³⁴

In light of this dilemma, "Jewish agricultural workers" appealed to the highest political authority—the WZO, arguing that "only a laboring class . . . could produce the numerical Jewish mass necessary for the security of the Zionist project in Palestine."³⁵ Labor Zionism needed financial stability to successfully recruit and maintain Ashkenazim settlers, and that could not be done without a major economic overhaul. The WZO was more than sympathetic. At their 1920 London Conference, the WZO made their alliance with the LSM official, which meant the WZO's JNF funds became Zionist "national capital"—national capital that could be directly mobilized on behalf of Labor Zionism.³⁶ Then, in 1920 the establishment of the Histadrut, the Zionist labor federation and social relief organization, coupled with the 1924 establishment of the Chevrat Haovdim, the owner and administrator of all of the Histadrut's economic institutions, further strengthened the LSM. Although its

³¹ Shohat, "Sephardim in Israel," 13.

³² Yaakov Zerubavel quoted in Shohat, "Sephardim in Israel," 14.

³³ Shohat, "Sephardim in Israel," 14.

³⁴ Shohat, "Sephardim in Israel," 14.

³⁵ Shafir and Peled, *Being Israeli*, 39.

³⁶ Shafir and Peled, *Being Israeli*, 39.

economic viability and small membership would still face major challenges, the Histadrut and Chevrat Haovdim effectively established the LSM as the dominating force in Israeli state-building: “[I]n developing rural settlements and urban employment opportunities, and in setting up its own economic enterprises, required for the absorption of immigrants, the Histadrut in effect created a new and separate national society and acted as its state-in-the-making. Each member of the Histadrut now became a citizen of that state-in-the-making.”³⁷ Indeed, the Labor Zionists of the Second Aliya may not have survived in Palestine, but nearly all of the settlers of the Third Aliya did.

The hegemony of the LSM over Ashkenazi Zionism signaled not only an ideological shift that manifested in the active “settlement” of Palestine, but the consequent “pioneering” spirit also became a central part of Ashkenazi-Zionist collective identity. Whether through “physical labor, agricultural settlement, or military defense,” volunteering one’s service in the collective efforts of Israeli state-building could cleanse one’s identity of the humiliation of Exile.³⁸ But to have this pioneering ethos one had to actively participate in the creation and defense of Israel. So it seemed the Mizrahi laborers of the Second Aliya embodied this spirit. On the contrary, they were second-class Zionists because they were Orientals:

Yemenite Jewish workers [the bulk of Yishuv recruits] not only received lower wages than European Jews, but were also given smaller and cheaper houses and supplementary plots of land. . . [Moreover,] the Ashkenazim of the LSM, having been allotted land by the JNF, went on to establish kibbutzim and moshavim and become the pioneering fathers of the country. The Yemenite Jews . . . were left to fend for themselves, and were excluded from both the collective settlements and Zionist collective memory.³⁹

In fact, JNF funding supported the Ashkenazi kibbutzim (collective farming settlements) and moshavim (semi-cooperative farming settlements) so that they could coexist with the private farms of the wealthier First Aliya immigrants. The Mizrahim, excluded by the Histadrut, were forbidden from owning land or even joining these cooperatives and were thus relegated to providing unskilled labor.⁴⁰ They became unskilled laborers without the pioneering spirit.

But despite the Mizrahim’s exclusion from this collective identity, the LSM still had no state from which to exclude them. Economically, the LSM-WZO

³⁷ Shafir and Peled, *Being Israeli*, 48.

³⁸ Shafir and Peled, *Being Israeli*, 43.

³⁹ Shafir and Peled, *Being Israeli*, 75.

⁴⁰ Shohat, “Sephardim in Israel,” 15.

alliance may have inspired international confidence in the Zionist project, but the 1930s created an entirely new set of fund-raising obstacles for the JNF. The pro-Zionist Balfour Declaration of 1917 had given hope to some Zionists that British financial support might follow, but British domestic demands quickly superseded Zionist support. In fact, when Ashkenazi Zionists finally began flooding into Palestine in the 1930s, an indigenous Arab protest became a three-year Arab Revolt (1936-1939) that resulted in the outright termination of Jewish immigration into Palestine; the immediacy of the Nazi threat had to take precedent in Britain. Moreover, JNF fundraising was still voluntary, but global depression severely curtailed donations. For example, the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA), even despite collaboration with non-Zionists in 1929, fell far short of its goals. Aiming for a 250,000-person membership in 1935, only 20,000 people enlisted; each contributed one dollar.⁴¹ Pitiful turnouts like this were endemic to American Zionist fundraising throughout the 1930s. And of course, the Nazis wreaked economic havoc on German and Austrian Jews through “Aryanization,” the official Nazi policy of confiscating German Jewish property.⁴² From 1938 to 1939 alone, the Nazis “took 60 to 80 percent of the amount paid for large-scale property transfers” and “several billion Reichsmarks that Jews had possessed;” this does not include the billions they had confiscated between 1933 and 1938.⁴³ Taken together, this translated into a mere one-million-dollar-a-year average in donations for Palestinian settlement throughout the 1930s—a far cry from the hundreds of millions needed to create the state of Israel.⁴⁴

If Zionism had collapsed at this point, the Mizrahim might never have been constructed. But ironically, the Holocaust saved Zionism. It not only provided the project with the funding it needed to build Israel, but it also provided the impetus for international recognition and, therefore, national legitimacy. This, in turn, inspired even more funding. At this point, it must be understood that Holocaust survivors and Ashkenazi Zionists were *not* one-in-the-same.⁴⁵ Instead, I posit that Ashkenazi Zionists in the Yishuv, even despite their literal and ideological separation from the European Jewry, manufactured an unassailable link between their own identity and the Holocaust. In short, Ashkenazi Zionist history posits that the Holocaust was the end of Exile and/or the beginning of the National Revival in Israel.⁴⁶ This construction excluded the Mizrahim, but this time with the potency of

⁴¹ Halperin, “Zionist Fundraising,” 955.

⁴² Donald M. McKale, *Hitler’s Shadow War: The Holocaust and World War II* (Lanham: Taylor Trade Publishing, 2002), 73.

⁴³ McKale, *Hitler’s Shadow War*, 102.

⁴⁴ Halperin, “Zionist Fundraising,” 950.

⁴⁵ Therefore, the preceding statements and the proceeding examination are in no way a denial of the Holocaust or of the very real crimes committed against its victims.

⁴⁶ Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots*, 35.

an internationally recognized Israel. In this way, Mizrahi exclusion was “legalized,” but the cost to Ashkenazi Zionism was substantial. This more authoritative construction provided the ultimate exclusion necessary for an “imagined” Mizrahi community, especially when coupled with the sizeable Mizrahi emigration of the 1950s and 1960s. To be sure, their historical exclusion would not begin to translate into a collective consciousness until after the 1960s (thanks in large part the 1967 War and the Likud victory of 1977), but the framework for that consciousness was secure once the Holocaust had successfully been integrated into the Ashkenazi-Zionist narrative. Let me then examine this construction.

Most Mizrahim were indeed absent from the crimes of the Holocaust, but so too were most Ashkenazi Zionists. In Germany itself, Zionist support was sluggish even after Hitler and the Nazis came to power in 1933. Since German unification in 1871, there was a substantial progression towards Jewish emancipation. Therefore, nationalism appealed to German Jews in the 1930s, just the same as it had appealed to Jews of the Haskala and Herzl’s generation. In fact, even after the Nazis gained political control of Germany, most German Jews still identified more with their German nationality than the Jewish religion. As Marion Kaplan explains, “Jews felt a deep allegiance to the ideals of German culture as they understood them: the liberal values of the German Enlightenment, tolerance, humanism, and reason. . . [Therefore,] most Jews adapted enthusiastically to the social, political, or cultural styles of their surroundings, proclaiming their German patriotism and ‘quoting Goethe (at every last meal.’”⁴⁷ To be fair, after the Nazi Boycotts of April 1933, German Jews seriously began to reevaluate their security within the German state. This is clear in the tremendous growth of Haluz societies (German Zionist worker-pioneer organizations).⁴⁸ But this increased interest in Zionism did not translate into actual emigration numbers. In 1933, about two-thirds of Jews in Austria and Germany escaped, but “only one out of ten came to Palestine.”⁴⁹ Moreover, German and Austrian Jews constituted only 20 percent of all Jews who came to Palestine during the Third Reich.⁵⁰ Admittedly, more aggressive Nazi policies like Aryanzation and the Reich Flight Tax most certainly immobilized many more Jews who would otherwise have left Germany. But considering that most of those who did leave early on headed west instead of east, it is likely that even a lack of emigration restrictions would not have resulted in more substantial

⁴⁷ Marion A. Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 12.

⁴⁸ Kaplan, *Dignity and Despair*, 53.

⁴⁹ Tom Segev, *The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust*, trans. by Haim Watzman (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993), 35.

⁵⁰ Segev, *The Seventh Million*, 35.

numbers for the Yishuv. In any case, the fact remains that the German and Austrian Jewish presence in Palestine was minimal during the Third Reich.

Besides this lack of physical presence, the myopic political goals of Zionist leaders in the Yishuv also contributed to the Israel-Holocaust disconnect. Certainly, the Ashkenazi Zionists within Palestine were horrified at the plight of the European Jewry, and they, like Zionist organizations worldwide, anguished over a virtually non-existent financial base that might otherwise have been used to rescue Jews. Nonetheless, state-building was still priority number one for the leaders of the Yishuv. As David Ben-Gurion explained, “The disaster facing the European Jewry is not directly my business. . . [T]he enlistment of the Jewish people in the demand for a Jewish state [is] at the center of my activity.”⁵¹ To him, the Holocaust was simply the ultimate proof that the Jewish people were indeed under constant threat of extermination as long as they were in Diaspora. Therefore, survival was dependent upon a sovereign homeland and an army to defend it.⁵² Thus, as David Ben-Gurion put it, state-building should be the “political compass” of any rescue effort since the Holocaust was yet another, inevitable “natural disaster.”⁵³ Interpreted this way, the Ashkenazi-Zionists in Palestine prioritized state-building over rescue efforts, but they still managed to make the “universal” suffering connection to the European Jews—even despite the emigration deficit. The Ashkenazi Zionists in Palestine may not have physically suffered in the Holocaust, but their “Ashkenaziness” still made them victims *in absentia*.

In truth, state-building rhetoric translated into the action of Labor Zionists’ rescue efforts. For example, the controversial Haavara (Hebrew for “transfer”) Agreements between Yishuv leaders and the Nazi government financed German Jewish emigration to Palestine. The Nazi government granted German Jews access to previously confiscated capital in order to carry out their move to Palestine, but the capital could only be accessed through complementary German and Yishuv trusts. In essence, this complicated financial arrangement accorded the Yishuv leadership an increasing population and the Nazis a market in the Yishuv. This had two important consequences: the international Zionist boycott of German goods was broken and the Histadrut, Mapai (Labor Zionism’s political party), and JNF received financial windfall.⁵⁴ Simply put, the

⁵¹ David Ben-Gurion quoted in Segev, *The Seventh Million*, 98.

⁵² Boaz Evron, “The Holocaust: Learning the Wrong Lessons,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 10, no. 3 (Spring 1981): 17. <http://www.jstor.org>.

⁵³ David Ben-Gurion quoted in Segev, *The Seventh Million*, 82.

⁵⁴ For a more complete explanation of the Haavara Agreements see Segev, *The Seventh Million*, 19-34 or Avraham Barkai, *From Boycott to Annihilation: The Economic Struggle of the German Jews, 1933-1943* trans. by William Templer (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1989).

Yishuv leadership was “dealing with the devil.”⁵⁵ To be fair, the means of negotiating with “the devil” may indeed have justified its life-saving ends, but Zionist state-building was still the driving force behind the arrangement. As previously explained, most German Jews did not want to be “transferred” during the early years of the Reich. Moreover, the Yishuv Zionists had undermined international Jewish solidarity by breaking the boycott on Jewish goods. The Haavara Agreements were not about rescuing Jews because of a universal identification with their suffering; they were about a Zionist opportunity. As writer and Mapai activist Moshe Beilinson wrote in 1933, “The streets are paved with more money than we have ever dreamed of in the history of our Zionist enterprise. Here [in the Third Reich] is an opportunity to build and flourish like none we have ever had or ever will have.”⁵⁶

The opportunistic nature of this agreement and later Zionist rescue efforts is most revealing in Zionist attitudes towards the survivor immigrants. Before examining these attitudes, however, it is important to remember that the Ashkenazi-Zionist history of Israel relies on the linear “Antiquity-Exile-National Revival” narrative. Keeping this in mind, the “Exile” survivors of the Holocaust needed ideological training to meet the Labor Zionist goals of National Revival. More specifically, the survivors needed to become Zionist state-builders. This process of assimilation had two important consequences: first, it was yet another way the Ashkenazi-Zionists manufactured a Holocaust-Israel connection and second, the ultimate failure of survivor assimilation paved the way for Mizrahi emigration. Survivor assimilation may have failed, but the conflation of the Holocaust and the creation of Israel in Ashkenazi-Zionist memory did not.

Survivor assimilation began even before the survivors had reached the Yishuv. For instance, the Jewish Agency of Israel (the Zionist organization in charge of Diaspora emigration) implemented a policy of “selective immigration.” In order to fulfill the settlement goals of Labor Zionism, the agency deliberately awarded more immigration certificates to rural than to urban Jews, as well as to younger than to older Jews.⁵⁷ Urban survivors were not only agriculturally inexperienced, but they had also proven to be downright stubborn once they reached the Yishuv. As the German Immigrants’ Association complained, “The human material from Germany is getting worse and worse. They are not able and not willing to work, and they need social assistance.”⁵⁸ These survivors wanted to maintain their urban, business lifestyle. So even

⁵⁵ Segev, *The Seventh Million*, 22.

⁵⁶ Moshe Beilinson quoted in Segev, *The Seventh Million*, 18.

⁵⁷ Segev, *The Seventh Million*, 42.

⁵⁸ Segev, *The Seventh Million*, 43. In fact, the urbanized Jews proved so unsuitable that a year later, the German Immigrants’ Association sent a list to Berlin of those who should not be sent to the Yishuv.

though their particular skill set strengthened Yishuv and later, Israeli industry, their contributions were ideologically rooted in private, capitalist gain—a Labor Zionist “no-no.” They did not and were not interested in embodying the collective pioneering ethos of the first movers. Jewish youth, on the other hand, were physically equipped for the demands of an agricultural lifestyle. As Apolinar Hartglass, a Polish Zionist writing on behalf of the Rescue Committee explained, “[W]e must save children first, because they are the best material for the Yishuv. The pioneer youth must be saved. . . .”⁵⁹ But not just saved from Hitler—saved from the potentially corrupting decadence of the urban lifestyle, as well as from the shame of their own Exile. Clearly, the goals of state-building dictated early Zionist rescue efforts.

But once word of gas chambers, crematoria, and death marches permeated the Yishuv, the Labor Zionists were finally forced to disregard their policy of selective immigration. With six million dead, it was statistically impossible to be picky and still meet the goals of National Revival. It was also apparent that the Allies were going to win, so Yishuv leaders worried that survivors might spread “anti-Zionist poison” if they realized they had not been helped.⁶⁰ Most importantly, the end of the war presented a golden opportunity: How could the Western powers *not* grant the Zionists a homeland, especially considering their own hesitation to intervene had contributed to the atrocities of the Holocaust?⁶¹ The Zionists offered an easy solution to their guilt, one that would simultaneously shroud their state-building motives in rescue sentimentality. “By limiting the memory of the Holocaust to the Jewish people only” (which the Labor Zionist narrative had already done), the Western powers could “present this affair as a one-time attack of madness.”⁶² Recognizing Israel and therefore, a collective Jewish identity, the Labor Zionist narrative could then be a one-time reprieve that would soothe their collective conscience. As an added bonus, Israel was willing to tackle the refugee problems. Indeed, once officially instated as the first prime minister of Israel, Ben-Gurion immediately demanded the “voluntary transfer” of one million Jews into the new state.⁶³ Presumably these were all Holocaust survivors, but the Western powers did not know for sure. Nor did they care. They could offer the Jews—a monolithic population of Holocaust survivors—a homeland and substantial reparations from Germany. Meanwhile, Ben-Gurion could assert that Ashkenazi Zionists were the principal

⁵⁹ Apolinar Hartglass, “Comments on Aid and Rescue,” in Segev, *The Seventh Million*, 100.

⁶⁰ Eliahu Golomb, Hagana leader quoted in Segev, *The Seventh Million*, 86.

⁶¹ For more on Western Anti-Semitism in Holocaust rescue, see David S. Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945* (New York: The New Press, 1998.)

⁶² Evron, “Learning the Wrong Lessons,” 18.

⁶³ Segev, *The Seventh Million*, 113.

players in saving Jews, or at least, Jewish survivors. Not surprisingly, when David Ben-Gurion declared Israeli independence on May 14, 1948, the Western powers could not recognize it fast enough. The myth had become truth: Israel and the Holocaust were now two sides of the same proverbial coin.

The point of all of this is not to criticize the Zionist rescue efforts. However, Labor Zionists had repeatedly professed their settlement goals. Other than in the name of humanitarian or religious solidarity, they were not obligated to prioritize the European Jewry. The Zionist narrative, however, proclaimed Labor Zionists *did* want to rescue Jews more than anything else. Moreover, they provided the survivors with a homeland after the war, one that Western nations were willing to support. In 1949, after the largest influx of Holocaust survivors had arrived in Israel, they still only constituted one-third of the total population.⁶⁴ And while the 1961 Eichmann trial brought to light the magnitude of Nazi persecution, Israeli Zionists deliberately neglected Holocaust commemoration because the apparent defeatism of Jewish Holocaust victims denigrated the heroic spirit of the Yishuv pioneers.⁶⁵

But most of all, the refusal of many survivors to assimilate to Zionist ideology was a key factor in “[tapping] the demographic (i.e. quantitative) potential of Middle Eastern and North African Jews.”⁶⁶ Indeed, they were recruited—covertly and insidiously in the case of the Iraqi Jews—because the Zionists needed numbers.⁶⁷ The Soviets had cut off eastern European emigration, and the War of 1948, despite Israeli success, was a clear reminder that Jews were now under constant threat of Arab annihilation. So the Israeli government implemented the “transfer” of the Mizrahi (a population Ben-Gurion *had* been counting in his million-person transfer of 1948).⁶⁸ In fact, by the end of the 1950s, the Mizrahi had exceeded 50 percent of the total Israeli population.⁶⁹ However, the Orientalist framework remained for the Ashkenazi Zionists, and despite the quantitative necessity of the Mizrahi, Ben-Gurion was suspect of their ethnic quality: “We do not want Israelis to become Arabs. We are in duty bound to fight against the spirit of the Levant, which corrupts individuals and societies, and preserve the authentic Jewish values as they crystallized in the [evidently European] Diaspora.”⁷⁰ The

⁶⁴ Segev, *The Seventh Million*, 154.

⁶⁵ Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots*, 76.

⁶⁶ Shafir and Peled, *Being Israeli*, 77.

⁶⁷ For more on the covert collaboration between the Ashkenazi-Israeli/Iraqi collaboration to expel Iraqi Jews, see Elie Kedourie, *Arab Political Memoirs and Other Studies* (London: Cass, 1974).

⁶⁸ Segev, *The Seventh Million*, 113.

⁶⁹ Shafir and Peled, *Being Israeli*, 89.

⁷⁰ Ben-Gurion quoted in Shafir and Peled, *Being Israeli*, 77.

Ashkenazim had already constructed their Israeli identity in the Yishuv and during the Holocaust; the Mizrahi were simply not part of it. Therefore, their numbers qualified them for citizenship, but their lack of history did not qualify them for equal status. This identity based on exclusion formed the foundations for their imagined community.

Although one might assume second-class status would force the Mizrahim into the ideological arms of the Palestinians or larger Arab world, they too had rejected the Mizrahim. Between the Palestinian betrayal of Balfour, the failed Arab Revolt, and the United Nations' 1947 partition of Palestine, the Arabs had begun to subscribe to the Zionists' construction of a monolithic Jew, but a peculiar and dangerous version instead. Although Arab nations had undergone progressive secularization and modernization since the Ottoman's Tanzimat reforms of the late nineteenth century, Zionism was "a movement whose principals ran counter to the classical principals of modern international law." Moreover, Israel was a Western-sponsored state "built on the immigration of a specific group on the basis of religious affiliation."⁷¹ For Arab nationalists—many in the midst of their own post-colonial battles with Western nations—this formula could only mean that Israel was a Western overseer planted in an Arab world. Thus, Arab nationalists denied the existence of Israel more vehemently with every humiliating, western-subsidized defeat: Arab losses in 1948, 1956, 1967, and 1973 "convinced them . . . [Israelis were] a new breed of Jew whose very existence [was] a menace to the Arab world."⁷² But from the Western perspective, the Labor Zionist narrative "proved" that Israel's existence was penance for the "universal" sins of the Holocaust. Thus, every Arab denial of Israel was a denial of the Holocaust itself. Meanwhile, "the Arabs [struggled to figure out] why they had to expiate a crime that was not theirs."⁷³

In this way, the Arabs, the West and the Israelis authenticated the Arab-Israeli dichotomy created by the Zionists. Just as the Zionists believed the Arab world caused them a constant threat, so too did the Arabs believe they were under constant threat from western-sponsored orthodox Jews. Orientalism had come full-circle; Jews *and* Arabs were monoliths, engaged in an Arab-Israeli conflict that represented the battle between East and West. So too had the Zionists created a self-fulfilling prophecy, a real anti-Semitic threat from what had been a relatively pluralistic Arab world. Indeed, between 1948 and 1960, 870,000 Arab Jews from Yemen, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Iran, and

⁷¹ Georges Corm, "Thoughts on the Roots of the Arab-Israeli Conflict," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 21, no. 3 (Spring 1992): 74, <http://www.jstor.org>.

⁷² Raphael Patai, *The Seed of Abraham: Jews and Arabs in Contact and Conflict* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1986), 284.

⁷³ Corm, "Thoughts on the Roots," 74.

Afghanistan flooded into Israel. 600,000 of them were refugees in search of religious asylum.⁷⁴ Because of the newly created Arab-Israeli dichotomy, Arab nationalists now saw the Mizrahim as “always and everywhere genetically Jewish and ideologically Zionist, regardless of historical origins, cultural affinities, political affiliations, and even professed ideologies.”⁷⁵ The once tolerated minority was simply and innately an enemy of the Arab world.

Once they had arrived in Israel, the Mizrahi found that their “Jewishness” offered them a privileged position over the Palestinians. They simply needed to deny their Arab culture and assert their Jewish religiosity to prove their loyalty. Because 90 percent of these persecuted new arrivals were devout Jews, many were willing to embrace these demands.⁷⁶ This cooperation appears convenient for Labor state-building, but one must remember the modern and secular origins of Ashkenazi Zionism. As James Gelvin explains, “Because [European] anti-Semitism did not distinguish between observant and nonobservant Jews, it had the effect of strengthening the belief within the Jewish community that shared history and culture, not religious belief or practice, made their community a community.”⁷⁷ Applied to the Mizrahim, Ashkenazi Zionism privileged the “shared history and culture” of Yishuv pioneering and Holocaust survival over religious piety—a history and culture of which these post-1948 Mizrahi newcomers could never be a part. In Orientalist terms, the “[Mizrahim had to be] reduced to a kind of human flatness, which . . . would remove from [them their] complicating [Arab] nature.”⁷⁸ Their late arrival, however, meant they were only suited to be second-class citizens and workhorses in the service of Labor settlement.

And second-class workhorses they became. Immediately upon their arrival, the Mizrahim were sent to kibbutzim and moshavim to undergo Ashkenazi indoctrination and to supply agricultural labor. Likewise, between 1952 and 1964, development towns sprang up along Palestinian borders to absorb the overflow of Mizrahi immigrants. Built on top of deserted Palestinian towns and old British air force bases, these development towns quickly became neglected urban slums that bred a disenfranchised blue-collar workforce and myriad social problems. These were crucibles for a Mizrahi “awakening.”⁷⁹ In fact, even before the 1948 war,

⁷⁴ Donna Rosenthal, *The Israelis: Ordinary People in an Extraordinary Land* (New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc., 2005), 115.

⁷⁵ Shohat, “Invention,” 8.

⁷⁶ Sami Shalom Chetrit, “Mizrahi Politics in Israel: Between Integration and Alternative,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 29, no. 4 (Autumn, 2000): 56. <http://www.jstor.org>.

⁷⁷ Gelvin, *Israel-Palestine Conflict*, 41.

⁷⁸ Said, *Orientalism*, 150.

⁷⁹ Kenneth Brown, “Iron and a King: The Likud and the Oriental Jews,” *MERIP Reports* no. 114 (May 1983): 10, <http://www.jstor.org>.

Ben-Gurion had established a “party key” system that divided Mizrahi voter registration among various political parties in important Zionist institutes so that Ashkenazi Labor could always maintain its majority.⁸⁰ Not surprisingly, this political chokehold had a major impact on Mizrahi social conditions. For example, by 1976 the Mizrahim comprised 52 percent of Israel’s population, but held less than 10 percent of government jobs, made up only 11 percent of university students, and accounted for 85 percent of all juvenile delinquents.⁸¹ Moreover, not one development town had anything other than a vocational high school until 1995.⁸² Ashkenazi Zionism may have quantified membership by religion, but it still qualified it by nationality. Clearly, the Mizrahim’s Arab origins did not qualify them for full membership in Israeli society.

Nonetheless, the Ashkenazi-Mizrahi relationship has proven to be a dialectical one. Although a collective Mizrahi consciousness has yet to be fully realized, “[t]he primary and dominant pattern of Mizrahi political action in Israel [was] set when Zionist organizations were established in Arab countries to mobilize local Jews for Arab emigration to Israel.”⁸³ For example, while many Mizrahim collaborated with Zionist leaders in exchange for government positions and other lucrative rewards, the League of Former Moroccans and the Organization of Immigrants from Babylonia instead rallied the Mizrahi community to fight for economic and social relief.⁸⁴ Likewise, the poverty-stricken residents of Haifa’s Wadi Salib neighborhood, tired of broken government promises and economic inequality, staged mass riots in 1959.⁸⁵ The leaders were eventually subdued and enticed to join Labor’s Haifa Workers’ Council, but not before the riots had spread to other parts of the country.

In 1971, inspired by the American Black Panthers and the South American Communist revolutionaries, the Israeli Black Panthers were born. Fed up with housing problems, poor wages, and inequitable education, the Mizrahi-dominated Panthers launched nationwide demonstrations. Although the Labor-dominated media focused on the “delinquents” who attacked police and government targets, the demonstrations were not so juvenile. In fact, the tens of thousands who took to the streets also took to the polls, garnering 1.7% of the vote in that year’s Knesset elections.⁸⁶ This may appear a meager

⁸⁰ Chetrit, “Mizrahi Politics”

⁸¹ Shalom Cohen and Kokhavi Shemesh, “The Origin and Development of the Israeli Black Panther Movement,” *MERIP Reports* no. 49 (July 1976): 20. <http://www.jstor.org>.

⁸² Rosenthal, *The Israelis*, 126.

⁸³ Chetrit, “Mizrahi Politics,” 52.

⁸⁴ Chetrit, “Mizrahi Politics,” 53.

⁸⁵ Tom Segev, *1967: Israel, the War, and the Year that Transformed the Middle East*, trans. by Jessica Cohen (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007), 48-49.

⁸⁶ Cohen and Shemesh, “Israeli Black Panther Movement,” 19.

showing, but considering the Mizrahi's substantial political and economic obstacles, this was no small feat. Moreover, it would be only six more years until Menachem Begin and the Mizrahi-supported Likud Party would overthrow Labor's political monopoly.

Begin was "a Polish Jew with undeniable Ashkenazi style," but the Likud party was *not* the "Ashkenazi Establishment" that had erased the Mizrahim from Israel's pioneer and Holocaust memories.⁸⁷ The Labor party manufactured the exclusionary; simply by that distinction, the Likud Party was a promising alternative. Begin, a brilliant campaigner, targeted development towns and paid lip service to the Mizrahim's social concerns, but the party's Greater-Israel ideology was their biggest draw. Upon its 1973 formation, the Likud elucidated this ideology: "The right of the Jewish People to Eretz Yisrael is eternal and indisputable, and linked to our right to security and peace. The state of Israel has a right and claim to sovereignty over Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip. . . ."⁸⁸ In essence, Jews, because of their *religious* identity, had a right to all of the land of Israel—Gaza, the West Bank, Golan Heights, and even the Sinai briefly following the 1967 War. Consequences for the Palestinians aside, the Likud, which means "unity", "[brought together all] Jews by a mystical and semi-religious orientation."⁸⁹ For the more devout Mizrahim, unification based on religious identity meant elevation to the status of the Ashkenazim. But this was the great irony or perhaps, the greatest proof of Ashkenazi hegemony. As late as the 1980s, most Mizrahim did not seek separation from the Ashkenazim or tolerance for their Arab origins; they sought equal footing *within* the Ashkenazi narrative. In this way, all of the Mizrahim's resistance—the Wadi Salib Uprising, the Israeli Black Panthers, and the Likud victory of 1977—still aimed to "[fully incorporate] the Oriental Jews into the Negation of Exile, territorial narrative;" they still aimed to become "'normal'"—or Ashkenazi—Jews.⁹⁰

Despite the psychological success of assimilation, the Mizrahim were (and continue to be) a distinctive population. When Zionist historiography boasted about the success of the Israeli "melting pot," many Mizrahim continued to listen to Arab music and watch Arab television at home. While "thousands of Ashkenazi 'wannabes' rejected their Arab origins and [mimicked] Sabra Europeanized speech patterns, body language, gestures, and thinking," others

⁸⁷ Brown, "Iron and a King," 6.

⁸⁸ Quoted in Efli Pallis, "The Likud Party: A Primer," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 21, no. 2 (Winter 1992): 42. <http://www.jstor.org>.

⁸⁹ Pallis, "Likud," 49.

⁹⁰ Gabriel Piterberg, "Domestic Orientalism: The Representation of 'Oriental' Jews in Zionist/Israeli Historiography," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 23, no. 2 (Nov. 1996): 126. <http://www.jstor.org>.

privately celebrated Arab holidays.⁹¹ And when the Likud Party failed to address social inequalities, TAMI, the first political party to specifically address the Mizrahi, was created in 1981.⁹² While short-lived, the TAMI attempted to form a separate, collective Mizrahi identity.

Unfortunately, this identity—necessarily rooted in Jewish piety—fermented in both Zionism’s nationalist framework and the larger Arab-Israeli conflict. Thus, many Mizrahim, in an effort to assert their Jewish identity, have continued to project their Arab self-loathing upon the ubiquitous and ever-multiplying Palestinian population in the name of Israeli nationalism.⁹³ One only need examine the Likud and, more recently, the Shas Party’s fiercely radical policies on Palestinian removal to see this. To be sure, many Mizrahi and sympathetic Ashkenazi scholars have recently begun to celebrate their Arab culture, and thus, empathize with and even embrace their Palestinian brethren. But the benefits and privileges of Ashkenazi assimilation have kept many Mizrahim stubbornly in compliance with the system; a successful and unified Mizrahi challenge has yet to be presented. Today, Ashkenazi Labor Zionism has outlived its purpose of creating a strong and sovereign Israel, but the Arab Jews—the neglected chimera of Labor Zionism—have resurrected and transformed Zionist nationalism as a living, breathing Mizrahim. For the Ashkenazim, the price might be political hegemony; for Israel, it might be a lasting peace.

⁹¹ Shohat, “Invention,” 16.

⁹² Chetrit, “Mizrahi Politics,” 56.

⁹³ Shohat, “Invention,” 16.

