The MSU Undergraduate Historian

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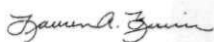9

Letter from the Editor and President

The second publication of this journal marks the continuation of a tradition of celebrating excellent undergraduate scholarship at Michigan State University. Highlighting seven unique new works, the essays in this journal act as the bridge between past and present that brings history alive. This second volume contains a diverse selection of topics from the East German secret police and Lucumí religious formation in Cuba to Jews in Vichy France and reflections of the Romanian revolution in the American Press.

However, the realization of such an accomplishment could not have been achieved without the following people. First of all we would like to thank MSU History Department Chairman Dr. Mark Kornbluh for funding this publication and for his enduring support of a small group fondly known as the "HAMSters". The department of history has also been extremely helpful in supporting this journal, especially Dr. Emily Tabuteau. We also send a great thank you to the individual professors who acted as blind reviewers for our essays – your comments and dedication helped immensely to improve the scholarship of our journal. We couldn't have done it without you.

Next, and most importantly on this list, we would like to thank the people that brought this journal off the ground – the staff. A more dedicated and fun-loving group of people thank our staff cannot be found. All are members of the History Association of Michigan State (HAMS) and all are proud of this journal. Our group of Readers sorted and worked with countless essays while our Board of Editors were there through thick and thin to make this journal the best it could be.

Beyond the history department we extend our thanks and congratulations to the essayists published in this year's issue. And, lastly for her spirit and her never-ending belief in us we thank Dr. Christine Daniels. We hope you enjoy this year's journal.

Thank You,

Lauren Burniac
Editor-in-Chief

Dimity Palazzola
HAMS President

A Culture of Power:
Representations of the ~~Rumanian~~ Romanian Revolution
in the American Press

ERIN K. BIEBUYCK

INTRODUCTION

A culture of power is a culture of representation. The intellectual, ethical, religious discourses of power may well tend towards high art (great representations), and their more economic, pragmatic ones towards industrialized art (mass representations), but both rely on their ability to produce representations of the world, and more importantly if less explicitly, of themselves in the world...[1]

In late December of 1989, after the fall of the Berlin Wall in the GDR, the rise of Solidarity in Poland, and the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia, the world turned its eyes to Romania. On December 19, an anti-government uprising began in the city of Timişoara near Romania's border with Hungary, and in a matter of days the entire country was in revolt against its communist dictator, Nicolae Ceauşescu. By Christmas Eve, revolutionaries had captured Ceauşescu and his wife Elena, and after a brief secret trial, they were executed by firing squad on Christmas Day. In spite of the reforms and revolutions that had occurred in the other communist nations of Europe, the overthrow of the Ceauşescu regime in Romania came as a shock to many. Ceauşescu himself had promised in a recent speech that "Romania would embark on change 'when pears hang on poplar trees.'"[2] The suddenness of Ceauşescu's downfall caught the attention of the American media, and for several days in December, stories about the Romanian revolution filled the front pages of newspapers across the United States. However, this coverage became more than an opportunity to inform the American public about the events in Romania. It became a forum in which the United States could showcase its power as a democratic, capitalist, "First World" state.

The coverage of the Romanian revolution in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Detroit Free Press*, and *The Boston Globe*, in addition to many *Associated Press* articles, which appeared in many major American newspapers, provides an interesting look at the relationship between the

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[1] John Fiske, *Power Plays, Power Works* (New York, NY: Verso Books, 1993) 277.
[2] John M. Goshko, "Romanians Continue Crackdown; Hundreds Said Killed In 'Massacre' Of Demonstrators," *The Washington Post*, Dec. 20, 1989.

United States and Romania at the time of Ceauşescu's ouster. In his book *Power Plays, Power Works*, John Fiske discusses international relationships as they appear in mass media. Fiske's work on cross-cultural communication and representation is helpful in understanding the implications of the U.S. newspaper coverage of the Romanian revolution. Fiske explains that when cross-cultural communication "is initiated and directed by the more powerful of... two cultures...[it] always runs the risk of reducing the weaker to a canvas upon which the stronger represents itself and its power."[3] This is what occurred in the reporting on the Romanian revolution. Because there was little or no reliable information coming out of Romania during the revolution, American reporters filled the void with their own conceptions of Romania, and as a result they reproduced the power relationship between the United States and Romania in our country's print media. In the newspaper coverage of the Romanian revolution, the United States directed the cross-cultural communication, and it defined Romania as inferior to itself and "exoticized" it.

CROSS-CULTURAL REPRESENTATIONS

In order to avoid reducing the weaker of two cultures to "a canvas" for the stronger, cross-cultural communication must be equally directed by both cultures involved. The weaker culture must "always exert a satisfactory (to it) degree of control over the communicative relationship."[4] This means that in the case of the Romanian revolution, Romania needed the opportunity to represent itself rather than being represented by the United States. In order for this to happen, Romania must "[have been] able to say what it want[ed] to with reasonable confidence that it [would be] listened to"[5] by the United States. What, though, is the difference between one culture representing (or exoticizing) another and one culture listening to another? According to Fiske, the difference lies in the results of the process. One culture listening to another "can produce genuine diversity in the imagination of the listeners," whereas representing another culture "serves only to reinscribe existing power relations."[6] Although this process sounds insidious, it is not necessarily an intentional act on the part of the more powerful culture. The reporters who covered the Romanian revolution found themselves in a difficult position; they had to cover a pivotal event relying on very few reliable sources (or in many cases no reliable sources at all). Romania and Romanians were not available to represent themselves, and therefore the

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[3] John Fiske, *Power Plays, Power Works*, 277.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.

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reporters fell back upon what they knew, which was the power and the hegemony of the United States.

One representational strategy that appears in the coverage of the Romanian revolution is "Othering." According to Fiske:

> The "other" is always a product of representation and, as such, whatever form it may be given, always applies the discursive and material power of the representing social order upon that part of the world it has made into the other.[7]

Creating an "Other" through representation uses an existing power difference to create an even greater disparity in power. The Other, by definition, is inferior to the self. Therefore, by representing another culture as the Other, the dominant culture defines itself as superior. The distinction between the "First World" and the "Third World" is a fine example of "Othering." The terms themselves infer the superiority of the First over the Third. The other, or the Third World, is defined in opposition to the superiority of the First World. In addition, the Third World is "the terrain where the power of the 'First' is quite properly exercised."[8] The assumption that the First World is politically, economically, and culturally superior to the Third World justifies the interference of the First World in the affairs of the Third. In a way similar to Kipling's idea of the "White Man's burden," the power and superiority of the First World entails a responsibility to civilize and develop the backward, barbaric Third World.[9] A recurring theme in the coverage of the Romanian revolution in American newspapers is the role of the United States and the role of individual Americans in the aftermath of the revolution. In this way, the coverage defines Romania as the proper sphere for American power.

Whose Revolution?

The first coverage of the Romanian revolution in *The Washington Post* appeared on December 20, 1989. The article, entitled "Romanians Continue Crackdown; Hundreds Said Killed In 'Massacre' Of Demonstrators", described the shooting of protesters in Timişoara. The author admits that *The Washington Post* was "able to piece together only unofficial estimates of casualties and fragmentary accounts of the fighting." In the absence of reliable information coming from Romania, the reporter turned to American politicians to comment on the situation. A representative of the U.S. State Department condemned the use of force against the demonstrators, and stated that:

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[7] Ibid., 278.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Rudyard Kipling, "The White Man's Burden," *McClure's Magazine*, (February 1899).

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Those demonstrations were an obvious manifestation of broad popular discontent with the policies of the Romanian government, and a clear expression of the Romanian people's desire to join their neighbors in embracing democratic reform and economic freedom. It is sadly regrettable that Romania remains the only Warsaw Pact country to reject all political and economic reforms.[10]

This State Department official imposed these desires on the Timişoara demonstrators. In spite of the fact that the U.S. did not have a reliable account of what happened or an accurate count of casualties, the State Department assumed that it knew the cause of the demonstration. This occurred frequently in the print coverage of the Romanian revolution. For example, in the coverage of Romanian-American demonstrations in support of the revolution, reporters used Romanian-Americans to speak for their former homeland and to articulate the desires of people halfway across the world. In *The Detroit Free Press*, a Romanian-American man claimed that Romania's "struggle for democracy" began 44 years ago, immediately after World War Two.[11] American observers assumed that the Romanian people wanted what we have: capitalism and democracy. Throughout the coverage, American reporters assumed that democracy and capitalism would go hand in hand in Romania. They did not consider the possibility that the Soviets pointed out: the Romanian people were "striving for a renewal of socialism on democratic principles"[12]

In the days that followed, other American newspapers began to follow the events in Romania as well. With Romania still closed to outside travelers, reporters relied on second and third hand information. Sources included "A Yugoslav trucker," "A Pole who reached Budapest from Timişoara yesterday," and various reports from European news sources.[13] In addition to speculation and reports from unreliable sources, the articles included the reaction of the United States to the events in Timişoara. On December 22, 1989, Viorel Urma of the Associated Press wrote about the possibility of the United States sanctioning Romania because of the violence against the demonstrators. Urma told readers that the U.S. "might limit contacts with Romania," and an unnamed official in the State Department

[10] John M. Goshko, "Romanians Continue Crackdown; Hundreds Said Killed In 'Massacre' Of Demonstrators," *The Washington Post*, Dec. 20, 1989.

[11] Zachare Ball, "Detroit-Area Romanians Take Pride in Triumph," *The Detroit Free Press*, December 24, 1989.

[12] David Remnick, "Soviets Welcome Ceausescu's Fall; Legislators Cheer Gorbachev's Announcement of Dictator's Ouster," *The Washington Post*, December 22, 1989.

[13] Allison Smale, "Romania Declares State of Emergency in Western Region," *The Boston Globe*, December 21, 1989.

claimed that the "cutbacks could affect programs of economic, scientific, and commercial cooperation."[14] This look at what the United States would do in response to the events in Romania established the power relationship between the U.S. and Romania. It accepted that as the more powerful of the two countries, the United States had the responsibility to punish Romania for its mistakes. Romania was established as the "Third World", the proper arena for "First World" power.

The coverage of the Romanian revolution did not only establish Romania as the proper sphere for the exercise of the United States' political power but also for the power of American culture and even of individual Americans. In an article entitled "Romania's Revolution," which appeared in *The Washington Post* on December 24, 1989, the author told readers that "Americans who want to see those new governments prosper have a responsibility to do a little more than to applaud from a distance."[15] The author went on to say that the "West, and the United States in particular, can do quite a lot to help" and that if Americans spent their money wisely, they could help new democracies (like the one that was expected in Romania) to succeed. In the end, this author went so far as to presume that the U.S. had contributed to the Romanian revolution through its "constant example of democracy, freedom and prosperity."[16]

THE DEATH OF A DICTATOR

On Christmas Day, 1989, the National Salvation Front (Romania's transitional government) executed Nicolae and Elena Ceauşescu after a secret trail. Naturally, the United States, which had just reestablished diplomatic ties with Romania, had a lot to say about Ceauşescu's fate. When Ceauşescu was ousted from power only days before, the U.S. applauded the "courage of the unarmed people in the streets"[17] and rejoiced because "'a terrible burden [appeared] to have been lifted from Romania—the burden of dictatorial rule.'"[18] After Ceauşescu fled, the U.S. reestablished diplomatic relations with Romania, and promised to "send them more than best wishes for the future."[19]

However, when the National Salvation Front executed the dictator and his wife, the U.S. changed its tone. On December 26, 1989, David Hoffman wrote for *The Washington Post* that the U.S. had recognized the National

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[14] Viorel Urma, "Romania Orders Tanks into Streets," *The Boston Globe*, December 22, 1989.
[15] "Romania's Revolution," *The Washington Post*, December 24, 1989.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.
[18] "Leader's Ouster Lauded," *The Boston Globe*, December 23, 1989.
[19] "Romania's Revolution," *The Washington Post*, December 24, 1989.

Salvation Front as the new government of Romania, but that the "United States 'regret[ed]' that the Ceauşescu trial 'did not take place in an open and public fashion.'"[20] The regret felt by the United States was contrasted by the reaction of Romanians themselves. Blaine Harden's article on the death of Ceauşescu contained the sentiments of one Romanian:

"It is terrible, but it is just," said Stefan Andreescu, a historian at the University of Bucharest, in a reaction that seemed to echo the feelings of many people in this city who continued on Christmas Day to hear the sounds of sniper fire outside their windows.[21]

Through this comparison, the United States proved itself to be morally superior to Romania. The United States advocated a fair and open trial for Ceauşescu, while Romania wanted revenge. The very fact that U.S. officials said that they regretted the method of Ceauşescu's trial and execution implied that the U.S. is superior to Romania. Because Romania, as a part of the "Third World", was the proper sphere of influence for U.S. power, its domestic affairs were up for review by Americans.

RUMANIA OR ROMANIA?

In order for a culture to represent itself, rather than becoming the object of representation, Fiske says, that culture must be able to express itself with confidence that the other culture is listening. In the reporting on the Romanian revolution, an interesting phenomenon occurred. In *The New York Times* and *Time Magazine*, the country in question was called *Rumania*, while in the *Associated Press*, *The Washington Post*, and *Newsweek*, it was referred to as *Romania*.

An article about this inconsistency appeared in *The New York Times* on January 14, 1990. In "Ro v. Ru", William Safire debated the correct spelling of this name that had appeared so often in the news that winter. He cited the AP stylebook (which said "Romania"), the New York Times stylebook (which said "Rumania"), Webster's dictionary (which said "Romania", but listed "Rumania" as an alternate spelling), and The Columbia Lippincott Gazetteer of the World (which preferred "Rumania" because "its editors thought that was how people over there pronounced it.")[22] Rather than trying to determine how Romanians would like their country's name to be spelled, the editors of the Gazetteer and the New York Times Stylebook relied on their own ideas about how it sounded and upon the spelling preferred by the

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[20] David Hoffman, "Diplomatic Relations Established; U.S. 'Regrets' Method Of Ceausescu Trial," *The Washington Post*, December 26, 1989.
[21] Blaine Harden, "Ceausescu, Wife Reported Executed After Trial; Army Defeating Secret Police in Bucharest," *The Washington Post*, December 26, 1989.
[22] Ibid.

Soviet Union (Rumania). Finally, Safire turned to the Romanian Embassy in Washington, DC and to citizens of Bucharest, all of whom said "Romania".[23] Safire turned first to American sources to find out the correct spelling of another country's name. Whatever the Merriam-Webster dictionary might have said about it, Safire was not inclined to listen to Romania, even in the simple matter of how to spell its own name.

The power of the United States relative to Romania allowed the U.S. not only to chose how to spell Romania's name, but also to "exoticize" Romania. In the absence of quality information on the revolution, reporters relied on what they knew about Romania. For these reporters, like many Americans, the only thing that Romania meant to them was Transylvania and Count Dracula. This old stereotype, drawn from Bram Stoker's fictional recreation of Walachian[24] ruler Vlad Tepeş (or Vlad the Impaler), was played out in *The Detroit Free Press* during the coverage of the Romanian revolution. In the midst of articles about Ceauşescu's flight and the continued fighting in Romania, *The Free Press* ran a cartoon depicting Ceauşescu as a vampire (see Appendix). The vampire Ceauşescu held a woman labeled "Romania", and was poised to suck her blood. While the analogy of Ceauşescu sucking Romania dry was very apt, the cartoon was a prime example of Romania as the object of representation, rather than an equal participant in cross-cultural communication.

A LOOK BACK

After the fighting stopped and it was clear that the fall of communism in Romania was more or less complete, the American press was able to reflect on the revolution. The feature articles on Romania that appeared in American magazines and newspapers in mid-January and early February of 1990 contain more "listening" on the part of the United States. Romania was not reduced to a canvas upon which the U.S. "represents itself and its power" to the extent that it was in the early coverage of the revolution.[25] Although *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *The Nation* still differed as to the correct spelling of "Romania", they did listen to Romania in other ways and even turned a critical eye upon the U.S. for supporting Ceauşescu before his downfall. In spite of this improvement, the coverage of the Romanian revolution still reproduced the power relationship between the United States and Romania, though to a lesser degree.

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[23] William Safire, "Ro v. Ru", *The New York Times*, January 14, 1990.
[24] Walachia is a region in southeastern Romania, which shares a border with Bulgaria. Walachia and Moldavia (another region of Romania) joined together in 1859 under the rule of the Ottoman Empire and achieved independent statehood in 1881 as the Romanian Kingdom.
[25] John Fiske, *Power Plays, Power Works*, 277.

In a *Newsweek* special report "The Last Days of a Dictator," Russel Watson and his colleagues recognized that although the U.S. did not approve of the swift trial and execution of the Ceaușescus, the "Romanian revolutionaries knew what they were doing."[26] This admission was very important, because it recognized that Romanians acted as they saw fit and that the United States, in spite of its position relative to Romania, may not have fully appreciated the situation.

Patrick Barnard's article in *The Nation*, entitled "Remembering Our Man Ceaușescu" took a critical look at the United States' and other "Western" countries' positions regarding Ceaușescu prior to the revolution. Barnard contended that the U.S knew about Ceaușescu's domestic abuses, but that it "supported Ceaușescu, first and foremost, because of its very large interest in playing that great game of the Cold War."[27] The article went on to discuss the role that the U.S. and other western nations played in the domestic situation in Romania. The U.S. and its allies leant Romania over $10 billion. Romania had difficulty paying back its debts in the 1980s and the first thing [Ceausescu] did was to impose an iron-fisted austerity on his hapless subjects so those unwisely negotiated loans would be paid and off the books forever.[28]

Barnard went on to ask what was to happen to the relationship between the "East" and the "West" and more specifically between Romania and powerful "Western" nations. He asked:

> Will Eastern Europe be treated as a giant Third World repository of cheap resources and labour, but one conveniently close to home- at least for Western Europeans? If this is allowed to happen, then we will have learned nothing from the tragedy of Romania and Ceaușescu's bitter, resentful face will haunt us all, East and West.[29]

Unlike previous coverage of the Romanian revolution, Barnard called for a critical look at the relationship between Romania and the United States. Rather than reproducing an existing power relationship, Barnard challenged it, and challenged his readers to look critically at something that was taken for granted by more run of the mill coverage of the revolution.

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[26] Russell Watson, et al, "The Last Days of a Dictator," *Newsweek*, January 8, 1990.
[27] Patrick Barnard, "Remembering Our Man Ceausescu," *The Nation*, February 16, 1989.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.

CONCLUSION

As Fiske points out, two cultures must participate equally and listen to one another in order for cross-cultural communication to produce real diversity and understanding. Clearly in the case of the U.S. print coverage of the Romanian revolution, this did not occur. But why did it not occur? In the early days of the Romanian revolution, there was no reliable information coming out of Romania. Ceauşescu and his Securitate had closed off the country's borders. Therefore, Romania was not able to participate in the reporting on the revolution initially. With this in mind, it is not surprising that the United States would represent Romania on its own terms. The later reporting on the revolution, in which Romania was more able to participate, shows that American reporters were not willfully reproducing the power relationship between the U.S. and Romania, but were doing it by default in the absence of any real information.

If we can learn anything from the coverage of the Romanian revolution and from Fiske's theory of cross-cultural communication, perhaps we can learn to be aware of the culture of power in which we live and to be careful not to reproduce or reinforce power relationships when we are intending to promote inter-cultural understanding or diversity. Even in the absence of good information, as in the case of the Romanian revolution, perhaps being mindful of power relationships will help us to avoid reproducing them unintentionally.

African Seeds and Cuban Trees:
Lucumí Religious Formation, Ethnic Organization, and Sacred Authority In Nineteenth Century Cuba

SHANTI ALI ZAID

INTRODUCTION

Regla de Ocha and Regla de Ifá, two distinct but interrelated religious traditions practiced in Cuba today, have come to attract adherents from around the world, including parts of Europe, Latin America, Africa, the Caribbean, and the United States.[1] Regla de Ocha/Ifá and related Yoruba/Lucumí-based religious forms have been estimated to hold over twenty million practitioners.[2] Ontologically, practicing communities exist in reciprocal interaction with *orichas*, spirit forces primarily governing elements of nature and knowledge. While Regla de Ocha generally emphasizes ritualistic interaction among practitioners and *oricha*, Regla de Ifá is associated with salient divinatory practice, but both utilize an extensive oral (and recently written) text, known as the *Odù Ifá*. The religious traditions are perpetuated across generations through ritual lineages formed by initiation into practice, and function to bring balance and stability among humans in their environment. The traditions emerged in Cuba as a consequence of the cross-Atlantic trade in enslaved Africa, which began in the fifteenth century and led to the massive diasporic movement and displacement of millions of African people to lands in the Americas.[3] The presence of Regla de Ocha/Ifá in Cuba is a testimony to the cultural creations and modifications achieved by Africans and their descendants living on the island. Ocha and Ifá originally developed from a broader set of practices generally referred to as Lucumí religion. It is the nineteenth century formation of Lucumí religious tradition in western Cuba that is the focus of the present investigation.

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[1] Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz studied Regla de Ocha, Regla de Ifá, and related Yoruba/Lucumí religious formations in Cuba in the late nineteenth through mid-twentieth century. Ortiz created the terminology "Santería" to describe these religious practices. I do not employ this term because it was conceived and imposed external to practicing communities and misrepresents their religious orientation. See David H. Brown, *Santería Enthroned: Art, Ritual, and Innovation in an Afro-Cuban Religion,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003); Stephan Palmié, *Wizards and Scientists: Explorations in Afro-Cuban Modernity and Tradition,* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002).

[2] Wande Abimbola and Ivor Miller, *Ifá Will Mend Our Broken World: Thoughts on Yoruba Religion and Culture in Africa and the Diaspora,* (Roxbury: Aim Books, 1997) 96.

[3] For a discussion of the meaning of Diaspora, particularly the African Diaspora, see Ruth Simms Hamilton, "-Toward a Conceptualization of Modern Diaspora: Exploring Contours of African Diaspora Social Identity Formation," in *Contemporary Diasporas: A Focus on Asian Pacifics* vol. 2, no. 3, c. 1995.

With the significant importation of West African Yoruba people[4] into Cuba during the first two thirds of the nineteenth century, and subsequent establishment of a distinctly Yoruba-based, or "Lucumí" Cuban religious tradition, a casual observer may conclude that these Africans simply recreated their previous religious traditions in their new island environment. However, neither the presence nor increased numbers of Yoruba people in Cuba alone secured enduring cultural influence or religious creation and persistence across generations.[5] In late nineteenth century Cuba, several complex factors converged to allow for the recomposition and codification of Lucumí religious knowledge and practice. These factors included demographic shifts of imported enslaved Africans, established ethnic organizational structures, opportunities for socioeconomic mobility, changes in ethnic affiliation, chance meetings of informed people, utilization of available resources, ingenuity, creativity, and protracted dedication.

In this paper, I will investigate how a Lucumí religious *tradition* formed in nineteenth century Cuba. I will examine how legal ethnic associations, known as *cabildos*, and religious authority figures were involved in the construction and consolidation of Lucumí religious knowledge and practice. To begin, I will provide a brief review of relevant literature and perspectives on Lucumí religious formation. Next, I will provide a brief historical context and discussion of Cuban *cabildo* socio-religious organizations. Finally, I will probe the relationship between *cabildo* associations and the substantiation of religious authority in the religious formation process. I examine this relationship through an analysis of the Cabildo Africano Lucumí and the religious leader Adechina respectively. The following questions help frame the scope of this essay. How did a Lucumí religious tradition form in late nineteenth century Cuba? How did extant *cabildo* organizations influence or impact this process? In what ways did practitioners achieve authority and authenticity in this period, why was this authority respected, and how was their religious knowledge perpetuated across generations?

LITERATURE AND PERSPECTIVE

Of the literature that critically engaged the subject of Lucumí religious formation in nineteenth century Cuba, David H. Brown's seminal study, *Santeria Enthroned: Art, Ritual, and Innovation in an Afro-Cuban Religion*, was most informative. A student of Robert Farris Thompson, Brown

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[4] "Yoruba" is a title designating both a language and ethnicity of people who inhabited current South-Eastern Nigeria and parts of Benin and Togo. For an excellent discussion of Yoruba identity formation in West Africa, see J.Y.D. Peel, *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*, (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2000).
[5] Brown, *Santería*, 77; Stephan Palmié "Ethnogenetic Processes and Cultural Transfer in Afro-American Slave Populations," in *Slavery in the Americas*, ed. Wolfgang Binder (Würtzburg: königshausen Un Neumann, 1993) 340.

compiled a thorough discussion of what he identified as five major *ramas* or branches from which most contemporary western Cuban "Santería" (Regla de Ifá and Regla de Ocha) practitioners trace their ritual lineages, as well as other prominent figures in the nineteenth and twentieth century consolidation and expression of Lucumí religious practice. His data was drawn from a variety of archival and secondary sources, and from a wealth of oral history collected through personal interviews with religious leaders between 1986 and 2002. Much of the data about the Cabildo Africano Lucumí, the prominent *babalao* (high Ifá religious leader) Adechina, and related figures in this essay are drawn from Brown's field research.

Much of the literature on the subject of Lucumí religious formation in nineteenth century Cuba tended to focus on general postulations of religious processes and activities that likely occurred, moments of religious expression, and legal parameters of religious practice. Sidney Mintz and Richard Price's *Birth of African-American Culture* offered general speculation about religious formation in the African Atlantic Diaspora, while Stephan Palmié's article *Ethnogenetic Processes and Cultural Transfer* specified salient issues particular to Cuba, emphasizing the role of *cabildos* in ethnic and religious creation.[6] Philip Howard's book *Changing History* and Fannie T. Rushing's dissertation *Cabildos de nación, Sociedad de la Raza de Color* offered a strong discussion of nineteenth century *cabildos* and the legal context in which they developed, but lacked details concerning religion.[7] The work of Aline Helg, Rebecca Scott, and Ada Ferrer emphasized the agency and sociopolitical and military activities of black Cubans, but tended only to hint at Africa-based religious attitudes or practice.[8] The seminal Cuban criminologist/anthropologist Fernando Ortiz also has a body of literature in Spanish about African-Cuban cultural forms, which includes early oral history and Cuban archival accounts of religious expression. His study on *Los Cabildos Afro-Cubanos* has been informative to the present essay.[9]

There have been several perspectives offered about religious formation in Cuba or the larger African Atlantic Diaspora. As early as 1937, Melville Herskovits postulated more or less a direct retention and recreation of African cultural forms in Cuba and Brazil, with a "syncretism" occurring between

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[6] Sidney W. Mintz and Richard Price, *The Birth of African-American Culture: An Anthropological Perspective*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992); Palmié, "Enthnogenetic."
[7] Philip A. Howard, *Changing History: Afro-Cuban Cabildos and Societies of Color in Nineteenth Century Cuba*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 1998); Fannie T. Rushing, Cabildos de nación, Sociedades de la Raza de Color: AfroCuban Participation in Slave Emancipation and Cuban Independence, 1865-1895, (Ph.D. diss, University of Chicago, 1992).
[8] Aline Helg, *Our Rightful Share: The Afro-Cuban Struggle for Equality, 1886-1912*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995); Rebecca J. Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba: The Transition to Free Labor, 1860-1899*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985); Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868-1898*, (Chapel Hill: University of north Carolina Press, 1999).
[9] Fernando Ortiz, "Los Cabildos Afrocubanos," *Revista Bimestre Cubana*, 16 (January-February, 1921).

African spirits and Catholic Saints.[10] Fernando Ortiz also adhered to the idea of "syncretism," but offered the term "transculturation" to describe the cultural and religious formations that he observed in Cuba.[11] However, both authors emphasized the form of Cuban religious creations in their work rather than the processes involved in formation. Mintz and Price suggested a historically based and process driven model for investigating Diaspora cultural creations, highlighting the salience of "subtle" data about identity, status, authority, and institutions to inform the process of creating enduring cultural forms. However, their admittedly general postulations about rapid creolization and power dynamics did not necessarily apply to Cuba. Stephan Palmié emphasized an ethnogenetic process in Cuba in which ethnic and religious meanings were composed in simultaneous and transgenerational processes influenced by extant organizational forms, especially *cabildos*.[12] He also called attention to the role that substantiating claims to power played in ethnic and religious formation.[13] David Brown similarly argued the prominence of *cabildo* organizations in religious creation, but emphasized the protracted and discontinuous "hard-won struggles" involved in composing, authenticating, and securing religious practice across generations in Cuba.[14] It is from the theoretical perspective of Mintz and Price, Palmié, and Brown that I launch this investigation into the role of organizations and authority in Cuban Lucumí religious formation.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In the nineteenth century, Cuba became the dominant sugar-producing colony in the world following the successful 1804 Haitian Revolution and economic isolation of independent Haiti. The dominance of Cuban sugar on the world market sparked a massive importation of enslaved labor to the island throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. Between 1808 and 1865, over a half million total Africans were imported into Cuba. The years of the greatest importation, between 1817 and 1843, saw 31 percent of the total 280,000 Africans taken from the Bight of Benin, a key port exporting Yoruba people.[15] Although enslaved Yoruba were imported to Cuba during the eighteenth century, their numbers never reached more than ten percent of the enslaved population. The rise in nineteenth century Yoruba importation

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[10] Melville J. Herskovits, "African Gods and Catholic Saints in New World Negro Belief," *American Anthroplogist*, 39(4) (1937): 635-643.
[11] Fernando Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*, (Durham, Duke University Press, 1995) 97-98; Ortiz, "Cabildos," 18.
[12] Palmié, "Ethnogenetic."
[13] Palmié, "Ethnogenetic," 346.
[14] Brown, *Santería*, 9-11; David H. Brown, *Garden in the Machine: Afro-Cuban Sacred Art and Performance in Urban New Jersey and New York*, (Ph.D. diss, Yale University, 1989) 10.
[15] Brown, *Santería*, 317, n. 1.

related directly to the collapse of the West African Oyo Empire and subsequent enslavement of much of its vulnerable population. However, the Oyo Empire had previously participated in the capture and sale of enslaved Africans across the Atlantic, suggesting that enslaved Oyo Yoruba were perhaps more familiar or slightly better prepared to manage dislocation from their homeland.[16]   By 1850, "Lucumí," a Cuban ethnonym for Yoruba people in Cuba possibly derived from the Yoruba term *oluku mi* meaning "my friend," comprised nearly 35 percent of the total enslaved population on the island.[17] Western Cuban entry ports in Havana and Matanzas provinces received many of these Africans, and most remained laboring in the West.

The Lucumí arrived in a Cuba of growing economic prominence in the world market due to its sugar production. In 1830, about one third of the roughly 300,000 enslaved Africans in Cuba worked on sugar plantations. By 1860, the number had grown to 150,000 out of about 400,000 total, and Matanzas province held the highest number of sugar-producing mills, produced the most sugar, and held the highest number of enslaved laborers on sugar plantations. Havana province produced far less sugar and only 23 percent of enslaved laborers lived on plantations. Most other captive laborers remained in cities, or on coffee, tobacco, or cattle estates.[18]

Laws existed since at least 1785 that emphasized the "right" of Africans imported into Cuba to receive religious instruction and mandated that they participate in the life of the Catholic Church. By 1846, Slave Code legislation mandated the conversion of enslaved laborers to Catholicism. One article required slaveholders to provide slaves with religious instruction or pay a fine of fifty pesos. Another article prohibited owners from working their enslaved on Sunday and recognized holidays. With regard to public cultural displays, the law allowed only blacks of the same plantation to participate in drum and dance events, only on Sunday, during the day, and only under the supervision of white Cubans. Such laws sought to prevent possible conspiracies against the government, and control and limit African cultural expression, especially as it pertained to any blending of African and Catholic religious forms.[19]   Despite these attempts, neither the colonial government, ecclesiastic authorities, nor slaveholders could control the occurrence in Cuba of religious and cultural activity indigenous to Africa.

[16] Robert Smith, *Kingdoms of the Yoruba*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988) 120-121.

[17] For "Lucumí" meaning, see Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit: African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1983) 17. For 1850 statistical data see Miguel Willie Ramos, "La Division de la Habana: Territorial conflict and Cultural Hegemony in the Followers of Oyo Lucumí Religion, 1850s-1920s," *Cuban Studies* 34 (2003), 42.

[18] Hugh Thomas, *Cuba or the Pursuit of Freedom*, (New York: Da Capo Press, 1998) 169; Scott, 23.

[19] Howard, 3-6.

The 1846 Code also stated that "no owner could refuse to [manumit] his slave, provided he is offered no less than fifty pesos toward the price of freedom" under the *coartación* system.[20] This provision would be instrumental in allowing Africans to participate in free Cuban society. The ability of those enslaved to gather enough money to purchase manumission was limited because slaves in their "prime" were expensive, generally valued at 120 pesos.[21] Some captives would collect money by doing work outside of harvest, selling stolen goods to merchants, petitioning third parties, or contracting their labor for money, and attempt to make at least a down payment on freedom, though such people were exceptional. Nevertheless, a substantial racially diverse free population emerged and by 1860 constituted thirty-five percent of the population of African decent and fourteen percent of the total population.[22] Although both the enslaved and free Cubans of color could legally own property and had some socio-economic flexibility, they still faced widespread and constant discrimination. The nineteenth century, especially the latter third, would be replete with African-Cuban activities directed toward ending slavery (conditionally abolished in 1886), fighting for independence from Spanish colonialism in the 1868 Ten Years War and 1896 Independence War, and achieving social, racial, and political equality.[23]

CABILDOS

Among the activities afforded to Africans and their Creole descendants in Cuba was the formation of semi-independent religious and mutual aid organizations commonly referred to as *cabildos*. These organizations would be heavily utilized in the ongoing sociopolitical struggles for equality and in constructing and expressing cultural and religious forms. The term *cabildo* literally means "town council," originally referring to a form of Spanish ecclesiastical and municipal governance.[24] Spanish religious *confradias* were a primary antecedent to *cabildo* groupings in Cuba. These religious confraternities of Spain were organized and regulated through the Catholic Church during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and the practice was transferred to colonial Cuba. The Catholic Church and colonial government were intimately related in Cuba and *confradias* were a legally and religiously sanctioned "council" form of organization. African and black Creole Cubans

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[20] Howard, 6.
[21] However, Thomas also noted that unborn and infant children would cost between six and twelve pesos. Thomas, 171.
[22] Thomas, 171.
[23] See Helg; Howard; Ferrer; Scott.
[24] Brown, *Santería*, 35.

were permitted to form organizations based loosely on *confradías* and, until the late 1700s, formally allowed to express traditional customs there.[25]

Religious organizations and secret societies existed in West and Central Africa, and enslaved Africans may have already been familiar with *cabildo*-like associations when they gained organizational privileges in Cuba. Indeed, evidence suggests that in the case of Carabali people in Cuba, religious fraternal associations extant on the African continent strongly influenced the nature of their associations developed in Cuba.[26] Scholar of West African secret societies F.W. Butt-Thompson identified several prominent Nigerian societies in the early twentieth century, including the Oro, Egbo, Eleku, Ogboni, and Orisha, which were responsible for religious and administrative matters.[27] Despite the competing models for group organization, it appears likely that Cuban *cabildos* emerged partly from Africans utilizing the Spanish model, and partly from Africans merging familiar group associations with available organizational forms.[28]

The *cabildo de nación* (nation *cabildo*) became a popular form of collective aggregation among enslaved Africans between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. Membership was generally composed of enslaved African-born Cubans, and not their Creole counterparts. These *cabildos* functioned like "miniature monarchies," were led by hereditary or elected rulers with differing titles like King/Queen, Boss, and President, and were usually set in an established location under the official patronage of a Catholic Saint. *Cabildos de nación* served several functions for members. They were structured for mutual aid, providing for members in times of need, assisting in funerary events, properly managing the necessary considerations for the deceased, holding collective funds that were sometimes used to buy members out of slavery, providing a space for social and political organizing, and they served as ethnic enclaves, allowing for reconstitution of identity and providing a forum for managing cultural and religious orientation.[29]

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[25] Howard, 68; Rushing, 218.

[26] Carabali was a Cuban ethnonym for Africans exported from the Calabar port in West Africa. Carabali in Cuba formed secret male societies with distinct religious practices, known as Abakuá. David H. Brown, *The Light Inside: Abakuá Society and Cuban Cultural History*, (Washington: Smithsonian Books, 2003).

[27] F.W. Butt-Thompson, *West African Secret Societies: Their Organizations, Officials, and Teaching*, (London: H.F. & G. Witherby, 1929) 18-19.

[28] Howard, 21-27. Jualynne E. Dodson proposed that the first forms of African socio-cultural aggregation in Cuba occurred in the eastern region of the island in barrack-like housing units of enslaved Africans and in runaway slave settlements. The terms of association in these early Cuban collectives predated those of *cabildo* organizations and also may have influenced the later composition of *cabildos*. Jualynne E. Dodson and José Millet Batista, *Sacred Spaces: Religious Traditions in Oriente Cuba* (Manuscript accepted for publication by University Press of New Mexico, 2006), see Chapter 1.

[29] Rushing, 214; Brown, *Santería*, 34; Siliman Mofundi, "Proclama que en un cabildo de Negros de la Ciudad de la Havana, pronunción su presidente rey Mofundi Siliman, un domingo por la tarde con motivo de la llegada de Cádiz delNavío San Justo," Yale University.

The semi-independent space that *cabildos de nación* provided played an important role in the process of ethnic and religious formation. The *cabildos* were an internally and externally stratified form of association capable of surviving past changes in leadership and membership. Yet, the means by which Africans distinguished themselves, i.e. along ethnic lines as implied in "*naciónes*" (nations), was not obvious or entirely clear. That is, the "*naciónes*" constituted some form of collective identification, but the criteria for exclusion and inclusion of membership in a *cabildo* or ethnic group varied. The enslaved Africans in Cuba were a culturally, geographically, and generationally heterogeneous group, making identification along ethnic lines as they were defined on the African continent difficult at best. As Stephan Palmié noted, "'tribal affiliation' was not the only—and maybe not even the most salient—organizational principle integrating the '*naciónes*' and their '*cabildos*.'"[30] As a consequence, Africans created new forms of collective identification, occurring in a process Stephan Palmié termed "ethnogenesis."[31] Yet, although *cabildo* organizations were largely organized along internally defined ethnic lines, communication did occur between members of different *cabildos* and ethnic groups; they were not necessarily exclusionary.[32]

Cabildos de nación were conceived as a mechanism for control by the colonial government. The government needed a way to manage the widely diverse population of Africans and legally limited *cabildos* to facilitate this purpose. Officials mandated that *cabildos* be extremely segregated, dividing black from white Cubans, Creole blacks from Africa-born blacks, and Africa-born blacks by ethnicity. By only allowing certain groups to legally associate, the government sought to divide the enslaved population and regulate and control its behavior. However, clerical and municipal authorities had lacked *de facto* control over the activities of *cabildos de nación* as early as the close of the seventeenth century and certainly by the first half of the nineteenth century.[33] *Cabildos de nación* were a most popular form of group organization until the last third of the nineteenth century when a series of laws leading to the abolition of slavery prohibited them.[34] Yet, *cabildos de nación* established a tradition in Cuba of semi-independent forms of organization available to Cubans of color. Several other forms of *cabildos* emerged, such as the *sociedades de socorros mutuos* (mutual aid societies) in

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[30] Palmié, "Ethnogenetic", 343.
[31] Palmié, "Ethnogenetic", 342-43.
[32] Brown, *Santería*, 63; Palmié, *Wizards*, 91
[33] Howard, 68; Palmié, "Ethnogenetic", 341; Brown, Santería, 34.
[34] Ortiz, *Cabildos*, 22-23.

the latter half of the nineteenth century, and *cabildos de nación* served as a model for their structure.[35]

CABILDO AFRICANO LUCUMI

With an established tradition of *cabildo* organization, a cadre of African and Creole Cubans from Havana and Matanzas organized the Cabildo Africano Lucumí in Havana. The cadre would become very influential in codifying and authenticating Lucumí religious practice. The Cabildo served as an institutional hub for these influential Lucumí to interact and exchange information and would be a salient factor in the consolidation of their form of Lucumí religious practice.

The Cabildo Africano Lucumí of Havana was formally registered in 1839 under the patron saint Santa Barbara and was represented with a red and white flag. *Chango*, the Lucumí warrior *oricha* spirit governing lightning and thunder, corresponded to the colors of red and white, as well as to Santa Barbara.[36] Some *cabildo* members claimed historical ties to the earlier Changó Tendúm *cabildo* of Cuban revolutionary José Antonio Aponte.[37] Until 1891, the *cabildo* was probably categorically considered a *cabildo de nación*, one of the comparatively few *cabildos de nación* established by Lucumí in Cuba.[38] However, in that year, Joaquín Cádiz, *cabildo* president and prominent African-born *babalao*, reorganized the *cabildo* under a new name and gave it new shape.[39] Cabildo Africano Lucumí became the Sociedad de Socorros Mutuos, bajo la advocación de Santa Barbara (Mutual Aid Society, under the support of St. Barbara). The Santa Barbara *cabildo* represented a transitional class of *cabildos* derived but distinct from *cabildos de nación*, and modified to fit post-emancipation legal codes.[40] It became a voluntary association, collected dues from members, had a hierarchy of officers, a constitution, and an established method of managing members in sickness and death, including a medical doctor on the payroll.[41] As with older *cabildos* of the nineteenth century, it also claimed African-born founders, held a Catholic patron with accompanying iconographic flag and ascribed sacred alter space, and participated in dual catholic and Lucumí festival events. For example, every fourth of December, the *cabildo* would

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[35] Howard, 177-78.
[36] Miguel Barnet, *Afro-Cuban Religions*, trans. Christine Ayorinde, (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2001) 48. Some scholars, including Barnet, identify the correspondence of *oricha* to Catholic Saints as "syncretism." However, "syncretism" is not an accurate concept because it assumes a blending of previously pure and cohesive religious forms, but no religious practice is static and free from change. See Palmié, *Wizards*, 115-16, 159-163.
[37] Ortiz, *Cabildos*, 26. Brown, *Santería*, 70; Palmié, *Wizards*, 345 n. 52.
[38] Brown, *Santería*, 63.
[39] "*Babalao*" is the title of a high religious leader in the Yoruba-based Regla de Ifá divinatory system.
[40] Howard, 177-78.
[41] Brown, *Santería*, 68-69; Helg, 132.

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celebrate the feast day of Santa Barbara and lead a formal procession that included Lucumí drumming after Catholic mass.

Interestingly, the *cabildo*'s new constitution prohibited any form of drumming other than Lucumí on these Saint's Days, suggesting an exclusivity toward mixing with other ethnic groups.[42] However, it did claim members, like Tata Gaitain (Eulogio Rodríguez), who practiced multiple religious forms. Gaitan was known to be a *babalao* (Ifá divining religious leader), powerful *tata nkisi*, leader in the Regla de Congo/Palo Monte religious practice, and a member of an Abakuá Society Lodge.[43] Although *cabildo* regulations forbade drumming rhythms other than those of Lucumí, his participation in several distinct religious traditions suggests that *cabildo* members internally developed a means of managing the multiple cultural and religious forms available in the diverse context of Cuba.[44]

By 1900, during a period of U.S. occupation of Cuba, further shifts occurred in the *cabildo*. It was again reorganized under a new name, the Sociedad de Socorros Mutuos de Nación Lucumí hijos y decendientes (Lucumí Nation children and descendants). The second change in the organizational title illustrates a shift in the demographic composition of members. In fact, several other Cuban *cabildos*, including those of Congo, Abakuá, or other groups, began to carry similar "hijos and decendientes" qualifiers.[45] Nación Lucumí's 1900 roster of officers slightly overlapped with its previous one, but included a racially and ethnically diverse collection of Africans and Creoles, men and women, as well as members from two emerging sub-Reglas of Lucumí religious practice; Regla de Ifá and Regla de Ocha. The "descendants" qualifier would also signify ritual, as well as genealogical descendants, reflecting a shift or expansion in Lucumí identity. Place of birth or genealogical ancestry could not exclusively constitute a Lucumí person, if for no other reason than most first generation African Cubans were deceased and importation of new Africans legally ended. Ritual initiations into Lucumí religious practice came to include the diversity of the Cuban population and link them to Lucumí identity through a ritual decent.

Nación Lucumí had several religious leaders among its membership, who are contemporarily, according to David Brown, "remembered as the most powerful and influential figures of the emerging Lucumí *reglas* of Ocha and Ifá in Cuba at the time."[46] Of the thirty-one officers listed on the roster, nine were already influential Havana Creole *babalao* Ifá leaders. At least six

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[42] Ortiz, *Cabildos*, 26, Brown, *Santería*, 65-66.
[43] Brown, *Santería*, 71-72.
[44] See Palmié's *Wizards and Scientists* for an extended discussion of religious blending among Afro-Cubans particularly between Lucumí and Kongo-based religious traditions.
[45] Ortiz, *Cabildos*, 23-24.
[46] Brown, *Santería*, 69.

of the seven Creole *babalao* in the *cabildo* represented four of the five principle Ifá *ramas* (branches or main Ifá ritual lineages), which were each becoming established by Africa-born *babalao*. These members included Tata Gaitan (Eulogio Rodríguez), Bernabé Menocal, and Esteban F. Quiñones, who were each "godchildren" (ritual descendants) of three different African *babalao* who founded major Ifá lineages. Three other *babalao*, racially identified as two "*mulattos*" (racially mixed) and a "*blanco*" (white) ritually descended from Quiñones. The former president, *babalao* Joaquín Cádiz, had recently passed by 1900 and was replaced by a new honorary president, Adechina or Ño Remigio Herrera, one of the few surviving African-born *babalao* in Cuba. He would soon pass away as well in 1905.[47]

The religious leaders and members of their lines of ritual descent, also had relationships with outside religious *cabildos*, reflecting how Cabildo Africano Lucumí had interlocking relationships around western Cuba. For example, *babalao* and *cabildo* member Silvestre Erice was also a founding member of Sociedad de Protección Mutua Santa Rita y San Lazaro in El Cerro, and Adechina was also a founding member of Cabildo de Yamayá in Regla, as well as a member of an Abakuá society.[48] Other relationships were more indirect. For example, *cabildo* member Ña Margarita Armenteros, also head of a main Regla de Ocha house in Havana, worked closely with Ña Rosalia Efuche in El Corro, known for standardizing Regla de Ocha initiation, who was the ritual godparent of Susana Cantero, who founded a second Cabildo de Yemayá in Regla. In addition, most of the Lucumí religious leaders in Cabildo Africano Lucumí also led or participated in informal house-*cabildos* where smaller religious communities gathered and practiced. Thus, the *cabildo* claimed interlocking membership with several other *cabildos* and religious communities, and had members with multiple levels of ritual allegiances and mentorships.[49]

Cabildo Africano Lucumí demonstrated how one Havana *cabildo* provided an aggregation structure and semi-independent space from which to develop and consolidate religious practice through exchange and interaction.[50] It provided a critical community and institutional hub for religious adherents to have access to religious information from elder African-born leaders, their Creole spiritual mentees, and a vast network of other religious practitioners from a variety of locations. The Cabildo gained social leverage from its Africa-born members even as, from its records, it expanded membership criteria to officially include ritual and genealogical

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[47] Brown, *Santería*, 69; Palmié, *Wizards*, 250.
[48] Brown, *Santería*, 81.
[49] Brown, *Santería*, 69-71.
[50] Howard, 56, 70; Rushing, 272.

Creole descendants as first generation Cubans passed away. Members like Tata Gaitán also reveal how multiple religious forms, including Regla de Congo/Palo Monte, were practiced. Gaitán's intimate association with the *cabildo* suggests that the ordering of these other practices with Lucumí practitioners was achieved through internal dialogue. By building on the model and legality of *cabildos de nación*, among other possible models, Lucumí successfully manipulated extant associations to religiously orient themselves and generally "serve African goals."[51]

ADECHINA

Organizational activities exemplified by Cabildo Africano Lucumí demonstrate important elements in the construction and consolidation of religious knowledge into a codified religious tradition. However, the means by which individual members gained religious authority in their community is another important factor for consideration. Who was able to substantiate religious power and authority and under which criteria was particular religious knowledge accepted and transgenerationally perpetuated? The life and legend of the African-born *babalao*, Adechina or Ño Remigio Herrera offers some insight into these questions.[52]

Adechina was a highly recognized and respected *babalao* in Western Cuba, noted most for his divinatory knowledge of Ifá, founding of the Cabildo de la Virgen de Regla in Regla, and contribution to the consolidation of Lucumí religious practices. Contemporarily, he is commonly regarded as "the founder of [Regla de] Ifá in Cuba."[53] Adechina initially arrived in Matanzas, enslaved and imported from the fallen Oyo Empire of West Africa around 1830.[54] Popular stories about Adechina's passage across the Atlantic Ocean describe that he "swallowed his Ifá,"[55] carried them in his stomach, defecated and guarded them on the slave ship, and later reconsecrated them in Cuba.[56] Upon his arrival, he was likely subjected to three years of "seasoning," a common practice for newly arrived Africans that included learning enough Spanish to fulfill catechistic requirements of baptism, and was baptized in 1833.[57] He would have been in his late teens or early twenties when he arrived and on his face were distinct Yoruba ethnic facial

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[51] Palmié, "Ethnogenetic", 341.
[52] Adechina was his Lucumí name, while Ño Remigio Herrera reflected the name given to him by his owner. Many Lucumí had such dual identities.
[53] Palmié, *Wizards*, 337 n.58
[54] See Miguel Willie Ramos, "La Division de la Habana: Territorial conflict and Cultural Hegemony in the Followers of Oyo Lucumí Religion, 1850s-1920s," *Cuban Studies* 34 (2003) 46, 66, n.50. Ramos found that Adechina claimed Oyo and not another Yoruba ethnicity as has been claimed.
[55] "Ifá" here refers to sacred nut kernels of West African oil palm salient to religious practice.
[56] Brown, *Santería*, 77.
[57] Brown, *Santería*, 317, n.2.

marks; three diagonal and linear scars on each cheek. Documented as "Remigio Lucumí," he was bought by the large plantation owner Don Miguel Antonio Herrera of Nueva Paz, a municipality on the southeast corner of Havana province. There, the Herrera family owned thirteen mills and 24,000 acres of fertile land.[58]

Adechina's work as an enslaved laborer in Nueva Paz was short-lived. An elder African *babalao* named Ño Carlos Adé Bí, among the most senior *babalao* in western Cuba, reportedly befriended Adechina and, in recognizing his Ifá knowledge and *babalao* status, gathered the resources needed to buy him out of slavery. Adé Bí himself was known to have escaped slavery by impressing two Spanish guests of his owner with his divining knowledge. In a meeting, Adé Bí the butler wagered his freedom on accurately divining for the two Spanish businessmen. They agreed and soon bought his freedom after his ritually-acquired information saved them from losing money in a business venture. Upon meeting Adé Bí, Adechina revealed how he swallowed, defecated, and protected his sacred nut kernels during the Middle Passage and the two went to a store to clean and reconsecrate them. From that point, Adé Bí functioned as a ritual mentor for Adechina.[59]

While identifying the Cuban origin of sacred *batá* drums, important ritual instruments in religious practice, Fernando Ortiz found that Adechina was associated with the two elder Yoruba Africans credited with creating and consecrating the first *batá* drum set. According to Ortiz, in the early 1830s, Añabí (Ño Juan el Cojo) and Atandá (Ño Filomeno García), two African-born enslaved men, met in Havana and used each other's skills to construct and "baptize" the sacred drums. Añabí had been a *babalao*, herbalist, and master of *batá* drums in Africa, and Atnadá was a master drummer and sculptor, and possessed knowledge for making *batá* drums. The two older men, along with the younger "great African *babalao* Ño Remigio," traveled with their consecrated *batá* to Regla, a suburb of Havana, and established *Cabildo* de Yemayá or *Cabildo* de la Virgen de Regla. This *cabildo* was probably not a *cabildo de nación*, but an informal house-*cabildo* that claimed the *oricha* spirit *Yemayá*, the Virgin of Regla, as its patron. In the beginning, *Cabildo* de Yemayá was likely housed in a family home since the founding members lacked the resources to sustain a formal *cabildo* organization.[60] Adechina likely offered his services as a *babalao* to people in this community.[61]

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[58] Brown, *Santería*, 65.
[59] Brown, *Santería*, 77-78
[60] Brown, *Santería*, 64-65.
[61] Ramos, 46.

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For at least a decade in the 1840s and 1850s, Adechina lived in Matanzas where he met his wife, a Lucumí named Francisca Burlet, and fathered at least one other family.[62] During his stay in Matanzas, he was said to have founded another *cabildo*, Cabildo Lucumí Santa Barbara, and joined a "Chinese" Abakuá lodge.[63] By the mid 1860s, he moved from Matanzas, settled in Regla, and began to attain financial security. Adechina was a skilled building mason, like many other Cubans of color during the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries, and had developed positive relations with the white elite class of the town. Adechina's personal Ifá sign, *Obara Melli*, was characterized by wealth, commerce, and riches. In his Ifá mentoring, he was known to declare, "in order to be a good babalawo [sic] one had to have a career; one should, and could, not live off of being babalawo [sic]" so as to avoid a conflict in interests.[64] He soon bought property in Regla, which increased his social status.[65] In 1872, Adechina had a registered residence in Regla, valued at 1,800 Spanish pesetas, and moved to another home in Regla in 1881. He also cultivated the resources to develop and maintain the Cabildo de Yemayá and around 1866, he commissioned a set of *batá* drums for the *cabildo*.[66] Toward the end of his life, possibly around 1891, Adechina would commission a photographic portrait that captured him in distinguished stature and wearing a formal western suit and tie of the period. The photo demonstrates a means by which he established his reputation and solidified his legacy as successful *babalao* and businessman.

Adechina initiated only five godchildren in his life, four of them in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and one in 1902. The ritual lineage he established was one of the five most significant Ifá lines, or *ramas*, in western Cuba. The African-born *babalao*, who established the other four Ifá *ramas*, also only initiated between one and five godchildren into Ifá. However, within two or three ritual generations of these Africans, their lines would dramatically expand, with some subsequent generations of *babalao* individually initiating over one hundred godchildren.[67] The first generation *babalao* maintained a highly secretive and exclusive form of the Ifá that kept the number of initiates low. Their secretive and exclusive practice may have also added to the authenticity of their practice.[68]

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[62] Brown, *Santería*, 78-79; Palmié, *Wizards*, 340-41 n. 21.

[63] Ramos, 45; Brown, *The Light Inside*, 24.

[64] Brown, *Santería*, 83.

[65] Brown, *Santería*, 78-79.

[66] Ramos, 46.

[67] Brown, *Santería*, 81.

[68] See Paul C. Johnson, *Secrets, Gossip, and Gods: The Transformation of Brazilian Candomblé*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) for a discussion of the relationship of secrets to authenticity.

In addition to establishing himself economically and as a prominent *babalao*, Adechina would also lend his reputation to assist colleagues and expand Lucumí religious practice. Oral reports suggest that in 1873, Adechina accompanied a close friend, the Ocha priestess Obá Tero, to Matanzas in order to introduce her and a set of consecrated *batá* drums to the Matanzas religious community practicing in the *Cabildo* Lucumí Santa Barbara he helped found. According to Miguel Ramos, "The rapid growth of Obá Tero's reputation as a priestess was greatly aided by Adechina's affirmation of her status."[69] Perhaps in a similar act of lending his reputation through recognized authority, he became the honorary president of Cabildo Africano Lucumí in 1900, five years before his death.

Most of the details of Adechina's life come from oral history accounts passed on across generations in religious circles. Whether or not all the events and accomplishments of Adechina actually occurred, the stories about him reveal important information regarding authority and authenticity. The popularity of the story of his passage across the Atlantic Ocean, where he swallowed his sacred materials to continue religious practice in his new environment, demonstrates popular favor for religious continuity and authenticity grounded by ties to an African homeland. Yet, Adechina's story was not one of passive retention of African religion, but illustrated an intentional, premeditated, and strategic transplant of African religious practice to Cuba.[70] His swallowed *African* sacred materials as well as his utilization of consecrated *batá* drums, demonstrate his possession authenticating ritual instruments, which further established his authority as *babalao*. His mentorship by an elder African *babalao* in Cuba also supported his prestige and authority.

His economic endeavors reveal how he strategically positioned himself in a place of socioeconomic flexibility to practice as a *babalao*. After achieving his freedom and social mobility, his founding of and participation in multiple *cabildo* religious communities added further credence to his authority. Even if he did not found the *cabildos*, the fact that members claimed the relationship to Adechina shows how they could authenticate themselves by using his reputation. This perhaps contributed to his honorary presidency of Cabildo Africano Lucumí. His establishment of an intentionally secretive and exclusive Ifá *rama* also shows how his ritual knowledge could further substantiate his power and authority in the religious arena. Given an established reputation, his portrait served to solidify his stature for future generations. In these ways, the life and legends of

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[69] Ramos, 46.
[70] Brown, *Santería*, 77-78.

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Adechina exemplify some ways in which religious authority were consolidated and respected beyond the period of his life.

CONCLUSION

The formation of religious traditions relies on a convergence of several complex factors. In late nineteenth century Cuba, the factors involved in the recomposition and codification of Lucumí religious knowledge and practice included the significant importation of enslaved people from a common West African region; the utilization of available resources and established organizational structures, i.e. *cabildos*; an elasticity in ethnic identity formation inside Cuba; the substantiation of religious authority and authenticity; avenues for socioeconomic mobility; an arena for social exchange and interaction among people with religious knowledge and interests; as well as ingenuity, creativity, and hard work. The importation of Yoruba people in the nineteenth century established a significant population of enslaved people with shared cultural and religious foundations. Legal ethnic associations like *cabildos de nación* and mutual aid societies offered a venue for these Africans to consolidate resources and manage their cultural and religious orientation with each other and extant Cuban Africans and Creoles. Through reciprocal exchange and interaction, people were able to discuss, discover, and apply relevant religious information. In this process, religious leaders and communities emerged and obtained recognized authority in the religious arena.

Cabildo Africano Lucumí and the prominent *babalao* Adechina both illustrate two dynamics of the Lucumí religious formation process in Cuba. The *cabildo* exemplified how Africans and their genealogical and ritual descendants utilized an organizational structure to intentionally and strategically gather, consolidate, and disseminate religious knowledge on the island. The life and stories about Adechina reveal ways in which an assembled religious authority lent authenticity to a particular kind of religious knowledge and practice. Cabildo Africano Lucumí and Adechina demonstrate the formation process of a Lucumí religious tradition in Cuba. The work done by the cadre and leader represent some of the many ways in which the seeds of an African religious reality could adapt to take root in new land spaces of the African Atlantic Diaspora.

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"Instilling the Value of Bettering Themselves"
Albert M. Margolin: The American Jew with a Purpose

AUDREY N. BLOOMBERG

This paper is dedicated in honor of Albert M. and Beth R. Margolin. Without their undying support, story, and love, this project could never been completed.

"*I felt that I had to do something better, a more important job, something of value,*" said Albert Margolin a United States Army veteran of World War II.[1] During his tour of duty, Margolin was stationed at the 107th General Hospital in England as a medic from 1943 until 1945. A child of Polish immigrants, he possesses the strong will to do things to better himself and the people that are around him. After returning from World War II, Margolin sought out various occupations that would lead him towards accomplishing his goals.

Albert Margolin's life illustrates the pattern of first generation American Jews. His hard-working and dedicated attitude throughout his life is typical of his generation of American Jews. When Margolin entered the service at eighteen years old, he immediately wanted a position that would make him feel he was of great importance; this became a common theme throughout his life. Not only did he better himself, but he bettered the image of the American Jew as well. Now, as an eighty-one year old man, Margolin has had a successful career in his own business, Livonia True Value Hardware, and raised a family that is now four generations strong.

Primarily using oral interviews with Margolin, this paper serves an insight into what the American Jew experienced during most of the twentieth century. As many immigrants came into the United States, Jewish immigrants found anti-Semitism had followed them to their new homes. After surviving anti-Semitism in Europe, these individuals struggled to gain acceptance and equality amongst their new American neighbors. The Great Depression affected all Americans and the American Jews were no exception. Jews along with their neighbors lost everything they had, yet did what they could to survive. American Jews also sought out opportunities to assist in the defense efforts of the United States during World War II. Once the war ended,

American Jews participated in the post-war cultural expression of American society.

Albert Margolin's hardworking dedicated attitude can be contributed to his parents, Harry and Sarah Margolin. Harry Margolin, Albert's father was born in the Pale Settlement along the Polish-Russian border, in 1899.[2] Sarah Margolin, Albert's mother was born in Warsaw, Poland in 1901.[3] Both Harry and Sarah experienced anti-Semitism throughout their young lives. When she was a child, Sarah and her parents lived in the Jewish neighborhood of the Warsaw Ghetto. In the ghetto, residents were given rations of flour and other food for the month. Sarah's father collected the rations of flour and baked bread for the neighborhood. "My grandmother was out with a basket of bread, delivering the loaves to the families, and she was stoned to death by the Russians because they decided she wasn't allowed to do that," stated Margolin.[4] Sarah was a young girl at the time and saw her mother's murder. This event stayed with her throughout her life, at the time she did not understand why her family was treated differently than her non-Jewish friends' families and why she had to obey certain rules and regulations while her non-Jewish friends were allowed to do as they pleased.[5]

Beginning in the late 1800s, the focus of anti-Semitism in Europe changed from a religious based persecution to a racial or ethnic based persecution. Before this transition, Jews could convert to Christianity, but in this new definition of a Jew, a Jewish individual could no longer escape from their "Jewish ness" by converting or assimilation.[6] Many attacks took place against the Jewish populations in Europe. More specifically, in Russia during this time, pogroms were very frequent. Many thousands of Jews were killed in these violent acts. The pogroms led to the mass emigration of Russian Jews to America in the late 1800s.[7]

However, the pogroms and rampant anti-Semitism were not the only events going on in Europe during this time. Poland was in great distress during this period. Its government was in very bad shape, so the countries around it began taking advantage of the situation. Russia gained a large piece of Poland, including the area in which most of the nation's Jewish population resided.[8] These Jews were ultimately forced to live in this area, called the

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[2] Margolin, 4 Oct 2005.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Hilary L. Rubenstein, Dan Cohen-Sherbok, Abraham J. Edelheit and William D. Rubinstein. *The Jews in the Modern World: A History Since 1750*. (London: Oxford University Press, 2002), 115.
[7] Ibid., 125.
[8] Dr. Keely D. Stauter-Halsted, HST 411 unpublished lecture, Michigan State University. 17 February 2005.

Pale of Settlement. The Pale became a place to discriminate Jews. Catherine the Great began to limit the privileges of the Jews after pressure from her advisors.[9] The new restrictions cut the Jewish population completely off from Russian intellectual society. Nicholas I furthered these restrictions by mandating that Jewish boys be conscripted into the Russian army.[10] The Kehillah chose the boys who were to go into the army.[11] Conscription basically meant a death sentence and when these boys were taken, the families said Kaddish.[12] These limitations brought the Jews to feel that their independence, safety, and security were taken away.[13] Their male children were no longer safe from the army, and with the new travel laws, they were not permitted into the interior of Russia, thus cutting them off completely from Russian society.

When Sarah was a young teenager she met Harry Margolin. Harry's family had moved from the Pale Settlement to Warsaw and he found an interest in Sarah.[14] During their courtship, he received word that he was to be conscripted into the army.[15] He confided in Sarah's father that he did not want to go into the army; he had heard of many going into the army and never coming out alive. Sarah's father told him to go to his house, pack a suitcase with a change of clothes and whatever else he could carry and come back the next night. He also told Sarah to pack a bag as well. When Harry returned the following night, Sarah's father gave them what little money he had and the names of people who could help them along the way.[16] At fifteen and seventeen years old, Sarah and Harry respectively, left Poland in 1915-1916 walking through the night across Europe.[17] Along the way they found themselves hitchhiking and walking through Poland and Germany to Belgium. Because Harry was escaping conscription they took every precaution possible so he would not get caught and be brought back to Poland to serve in the army. Individuals along the way helped them cross borders, hid them in barns, and gave them food and shelter. They worked odd jobs to earn money to continue their journey. When they finally arrived in Belgium, Harry found a job as a shirt cutter in a clothing factory; Sarah found

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[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid.
[11] The council of Jewish elders in the communities of the Pale Settlement.
[12] A Hebrew prayer for remembering the dead.
[13] Stauter-Halsted, 17 Feb 2005.
[14] Margolin, 4 Oct 2005.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.
[17] During the interviews, Margolin had trouble remembering some details, he was not completely certain when his parents left Poland, whether they escaped in 1915 or 1916.

employment as a hat maker.[18] They saved enough money to afford to be able to get married and buy tickets on the ship, *Canada*, to sail to North America.[19]

In 1920, Harry and Sarah Margolin landed in Canada. They immediately left for Cleveland, Ohio to live with some of Harry's siblings, who had already established lives in America. Four days after landing in North America, their first child, Esther was born. While in Cleveland, Harry worked various jobs, while Sarah stayed home, learning English and raising Esther. Soon, Harry was offered a job delivering soda pop in Detroit and he moved his family, leaving behind his brothers and sister, Morris, Itcha, and Rosie in Cleveland, to live with cousins. Once Harry established a steady income, they moved out of the flat with his cousins and soon found themselves living in various neighborhoods in Detroit in two to four family flats. Margolin said, "They didn't stay very long in any place, probably because of rent. It was expensive to live in any of these places."[20]

On August 15, 1924, Albert was born in Detroit. While growing up, his parents spoke mostly English within the house, "my mother very seldom spoke Polish within the house, she wanted us to learn the language and get acquainted with other children."[21] The only time Harry and Sarah spoke Polish was when they needed to keep information from Esther and Albert. His parents stressed the importance of remembering their Polish heritage, by teaching Esther and Albert Yiddish, and also becoming part of American society as well. The Margolins were members of the Warsaw Club of Detroit.[22] The club sponsored various dances, games and parties for the Polish and Russian immigrants in the Detroit area. Sarah and Harry would take their children to these events to expose them to their Polish roots.[23]

> Throughout the latter half of the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth century, America saw a large wave of immigration coming from Eastern Europe. "About 2.5 million Jews immigrated to the United States between 1881 and 1924."[24] Their lives took very different paths as they established in various parts of America. They sought roots in the large cities and in the Midwest. Some lived in tenement housing, while others pioneered the land in the plains. While these Jewish immigrants

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[18] Margolin, 4 Oct 2005.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Dr. Kirsten Fermaglich. HST 317 unpublished lecture. Michigan State University, 9 February 2005.

experienced the typical hardships of other immigrant groups, like learning English and adapting their customs to American society, they also experienced anti-Semitism. In Detroit, Father Charles Coughlin in his radio program explained his position on "the Jewish domination of America."[25] His opinions were common amongst most Americans. Mirroring those of Europe, this period also saw an influx of anti-Semitic organizations and restrictions throughout America. Besides violent actions, like those from the Ku Klux Klan, or the public anti-Semitic outcry, like those from Father Coughlin, American Jews found their admittance to universities limited because of quotas. "...but MIT only admitted so many Jews a year. And they never filled the quota because the Jewish men would not go into engineering. After they graduated they were discriminated against."[26] Expecting to abandon anti-Semitic actions, many immigrants found themselves reliving their experiences from their homelands, in America.

During Margolin's childhood, Harry and Sarah brought distant relatives over from Europe and many of these relatives stayed in the Margolin household for extended periods of time.[27] As the Depression hit Detroit in 1929, Harry was able to keep a job as a baker in various bakeries across the city. According to Margolin, "my father always had an open hand."[28] As family members needed to cut expenses, Harry and Sarah opened up their house to them and offered them a place to live while they survived the difficult times. As a young boy, Margolin never asked for money from his parents. There was no mention of money, Margolin said, "their main concern was bringing up healthy children."[29]

Harry and Sarah's generosity is mirrored in much of the American Jewish immigrant population. As many American Jews lost their businesses and fortunes in the Depression that followed the stock market crash, many reverted to practices of their early immigrant days. "Families doubled up, sharing space. They returned to the diet of their early years in America, filling up on soup and potatoes and eating less meat."[30] Yet, Jews did not stand idly by and let their families fall victim to the Depression. Housewives in the major cities with large Jewish communities across the country loudly

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[25] Hasia R. Diner. *The Jews of the United States*. (California: University of California Press, 2004), 211.
[26] Kim Chernin. *In My Mother's House*. (New Haven: Ticknor and Fields, 1983), 93.
[27] Margolin, 4 Oct 2005.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Diner, *Jews of the United States*, 232.

protested in the streets against high food prices.[31] In all aspects of society, American Jews sought out strategies to aid those who were in distress during the Great Depression.

As Germany invaded Poland in 1939, the Margolin family heard bits and pieces of information about the conflicts in Europe. However, as a fifteen year old, Margolin did not completely understand what was going on beyond Detroit's city limits. "My father used to get letters from family members," Margolin stated, "about life in Poland [under Nazi occupation] and Germany."[32] They heard about a lot of events going on in these countries, yet rarely talked about what was happening to their family. Margolin recalls, "We heard of the military and police men stealing things in the neighborhoods. I remember seeing Hitler's face plastered every place."[33] However, as much information as Harry received through these letters, there were also periods where no letters would arrive. He became very distraught that he was not hearing anything from the family he left behind in Europe.[34]

When Hitler came to power, American Jews began organizing and trying to respond to Nazi policies. In May 1933, the American Jewish Congress sponsored mass demonstrations and public rallies in cities across the country against the Nazi government.[35] Prominent Jewish leaders suggested that the American Jewish population boycott German goods, hoping that an economic boycott would harm the newly established Nazi economy. Other organizations like B'nai B'rith, the American Jewish Committee and the Jewish Labor Committee organized their own demonstrations against the Nazi regime. As news reached the United States about the mass slaughter of European Jews, these organizations came together on July 21, 1942 and sponsored a rally with twenty thousand people in New York's Madison Square Garden.[36] President Franklin D. Roosevelt sent a telegram to the demonstrators that declared that all Americans, "hold the perpetrators of these crimes to strict accountability."[37]

December 7, 1941 became a significant day for many Americans that were alive during this time. Margolin, however, remembers vividly a car accident he got into early that Sunday morning.[38] As a young adult, Margolin often helped his father on his bread delivery routes and this particular Sunday

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[31] Ibid.
[32] Margolin, 4 Oct 2005.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Diner, *Jews of the United States*, 217.
[36] Ibid., 218.
[37] Margolin. 4 Oct 2005.
[38] Ibid.

morning, he was driving on the side streets of Detroit when he and another young woman collided in their cars. No one was hurt, but this even was more significant in Margolin's life than Pearl Harbor.[39]

Besides helping his father out on the bread delivery routes, Margolin also worked at the River Rouge plant on the assembly line, making parts for motors and helping package materials for shipping, in Detroit between 1941 and 1942. As a teenager, Margolin did not know that Ford was an anti-Semite at the time. "You don't take these things to heart,"[40] stated Margolin. During this time of rations and shortages, Margolin's family would save their gas ration card and try not to use the family car because Harry needed it to drive his bread delivery routes. However, because he worked at the River Rouge plant he could have gotten an exemption from the service. Yet, Margolin felt that he had to go into the service for himself and for the betterment of the country.

Margolin received his draft notification in 1942 after he graduated high school. He did not leave for the service until 1943. Margolin stated, "You had a choice, and could mark it down on the paper, but that didn't mean that you would get your choice."[41] Margolin did write down his preference, aerial photography. He felt that this would be a great opportunity for learning. He was interested in understanding how a plane worked and enjoyed photography so he believed that this job would suit his wants and needs. Margolin said, "I did not rationalize; I did not think that I would be shot down necessarily."[42] As an eighteen year old, he wanted to take every opportunity that was presented in front of him, without much concern for the repercussions of these actions.

After he was declined from aerial photography, Margolin had another choice, the Army or the Navy. Esther made him promise that he would not go into the Navy, she was afraid of him being sunk by the German U-Boats in the Atlantic Ocean.[43] Margolin recalls, "When we were standing in line at this particular building downtown, the line was divided by every other person being assigned the Army or Navy. The guy in back of me wanted Navy, I wanted Army, and so we just switched places."[44] At the time the Army needed so many individuals to become medics, and was looking for

[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid.

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volunteers. "I felt that I had to do something better, a more important job, something of value," said Margolin.[45]

Margolin volunteered for the medics and began medical basic training at Camp Grant in Rockford, Illinois in 1943. Margolin never had to carry a gun or was trained in ammunition fighting. Instead, he was instructed in numerous medical techniques to treat the various injuries of American troops fighting in the European Theater. He and the other men were asked what they would be interested in doing in the medical field. Margolin said, "I wanted to help other people, have a job that was of importance."[46] Surgery interested Margolin and soon he went through surgical basic training. During his time at Camp Grant, Margolin would leave every weekend to travel back to Detroit to visit his girlfriend Beth Weiner.

Margolin was just one of the many Jewish Americans from various parts of the United States who helped in the war effort. "Almost ten thousand Detroit Jews served in the U.S. armed forces during World War II."[47] These individuals served in every aspect of the armed forces. Not only were American Jews fighting in the European Theater, but many went to the Pacific as well. Many of these men and women became war heroes for their various actions. "Marine Captain William J. Weinstein...led his company in the major battles of the Pacific, including Iwo Jima."[48] These individuals made valiant efforts to fight and demonstrate that although Hitler tried to exterminate the world's Jewish population, they would stand in his way before he could complete his Final Solution.

After leaving Camp Grant, Margolin was sent to Fitzsimons General Hospital in Denver, Colorado for three months. During his time in Denver he went through additional training in the hospital. Here, Margolin learned how to further help patients recently admitted to the hospital. He saw various degrees of injury, from broken bones to gunshot wounds, and learned how to treat each of these wounds. "In asking for surgical training, I wanted to do something of value, I couldn't just be the guy that changes bedpans, I was better than that, I wanted a better job. So I was able to ask for anesthesiology," remembers Margolin.[49] During this time, Margolin's name joined a large pool of other soldiers and as the army needed they would call up a certain number of men each week or month. He worked as a local technician at the hospital until the army needed him.

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[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Matthew Schwartz, "Detroit Jews in the Armed Forces: 1941-1945," Michigan Jewish History. 33 (1992): 18.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Margolin 4 Oct 2005.

In late 1943, Margolin was called up for the 107th General Hospital. The 107th was a station hospital that held 1,500 beds. Margolin immediately traveled to New Jersey to meet up with the rest of the staff of the 107th. While in New Jersey they were given various jobs to do to prepare for the journey across the Atlantic. Margolin was able to get a short furlough to go back to Detroit to spend time with his family and Beth before going overseas. He was able to see Beth graduate from high school.[50]

Margolin traveled overseas on the *Mauritania*, a large cruise ship renovated to carry troops across the Atlantic. "They had to change the ship over from passenger to cargo. We used the swimming pool for serving and eating breakfast," said Margolin.[51] The *Mauritania* left from the New York Harbor traveling to England. Everyone on the ship was concerned about the U-Boat attacks. Yet as a large ship, the Mauritania traveled a third of the way across the Atlantic with other ships, the middle third alone, and the final third with aid from British ships.[52] They landed in Liverpool, England and immediately the newest members of the 107th joined with the existing hospital in Hereford. There were four hundred fifty enlisted men working at the hospital, yet Margolin was one of only a dozen Jewish soldiers working at the 107th.[53] Margolin did not let the fact that he was apart of a minority affect his work. He became close friends with some of his colleagues and said, "There were certain people that I remained friends with until later in life."[54]

Immediately the newest arrivals were put to work. Hospital trains would come in daily carrying 500 to 700 patients from the coastline and other areas. The frequency of the trains depended on what was going on at the front lines.[55] First thing in the morning, Margolin and the other technicians would unload the train and bring the patients into the hospital.[56] The injured were then sorted by type of injury and type of treatment needed. The minor flesh wounds and broken bones were separated by the more serious injuries that needed quick medical attention.[57] Margolin tended to help the surgical patients first. In the 107th General Hospital, there were four operating wounds, with six beds total throughout the operating rooms.[58] Margolin assisted the physicians in the OR's with tasks varying from surgery to

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[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Albert M. Margolin, Personal Interview. 13 Oct. 2005.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid.
[56] While carrying a patient one day, Margolin injured his back, entitling him to disabled veteran benefits today.
[57] Margolin, 4 Oct 2005.
[58] Ibid.

surgery. Most of the time, Margolin did the secondary closures on wounds and assisted the anesthesiologists.[59] "As I followed the directions of the surgeons, I found it very interesting; I would have liked to become a doctor," stated Margolin.[60] The surgeons and other physicians at the 107th would take time out to answer questions and teach the young technicians.

However, as hard as they worked, Margolin and his fellow medics had time for leisure activities as well. "We drank a lot of beer!" remembered Margolin.[61] He was also able to travel to London on a short furlough. During the night, he and his friends were knocked out of bed by the constant bombings of the city by the Nazi Air Force.[62] That was the only time he traveled to London during wartime. Margolin later on in life went back and visited Churchill's underground headquarters.[63] Margolin occupied his time at the hospital by writing letters to Beth back home in Detroit. "…honey when will all of this end, when will I get home and what the heck am I going to do when I get there?"[64] Margolin shared his thoughts and feelings through these letters. "Beth would write at least three letters a day to me, and because the mail in the army was unpredictable, I would get twelve one day and none the next."[65] Although Beth was three years younger than he, they developed a lasting relationship through these letters.

> Bethie, please don't feel bad because we didn't get engaged when
> I was home. I'm sure you don't feel any worse about it than I do.
> But I promise you Bethie, that on my next furlough this is going
> to be the first thing we are going to do. Now that I know where I
> stand with your family, there isn't a thing holding us back from
> this one step. This is a promise honey.[66]

Not only was Margolin able to share his future plans with Beth, but he shared his fears, hopes and dreams. Each letter she received detailed the day's activities and ended with Margolin's reassurance that everything would turn out ok.

While Margolin served his tour of duty in Hereford, England, the Allied forces were gaining victories on the Axis powers. During the winter of

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[59] Margolin, 13 Oct. 2005.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Margolin, 4 Oct 2005.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Albert M. Margolin, Letter to Beth Weiner. 29 Aug 1945.
[65] Margolin, 13 Oct 2005.
[66] Margolin, 29 Aug 1945.

1943, the Allied countries created and implemented a strategic bombing offensive against the Nazi armed forces. The United States Air Force combined with Britain's Royal Air Force destroyed thirty to eighty percent of Germany's fifty major cities.[67] After the victory on the beaches of Normandy in 1944, the Allied offensive began advancing swiftly across the European continent. "All Allied armies streaked forward against little resistance."[68] American morale was boosted with the Allied forces beginning to gain more victories in the European Theatre.

In his early twenties, Margolin was still figuring out his political ideals and opinions. His attitude towards the Germans, Italians and Japanese, was "thrilled that they couldn't aim straight!"[69] Often, he felt the urge to pick up a gun and fight himself, yet he had a job to do at the 107th and could not just pick up a weapon and abandon the hospital.[70] Margolin said, "Naturally we tried to win the war even from our position sitting, or just doing our jobs taking care of the wounded."[71]

In the evenings and during their free time, Margolin and his colleagues would sit and listen to the radio. "We heard different sessions with Churchill from his underground headquarters and what was happening during the war and where everyone was at the time," remembered Margolin.[72] Margolin and colleagues were only concerned about where the Americans and Allied forces were at the time. Serving in the European Theater, Margolin rarely heard about what was going on in the Pacific.[73] There was a newspaper that came out in the European Theater for the soldiers serving in the various branches of the military. This newspaper detailed various events within the European front. "You have this great wonder of how long it's going to take, when the war is going to come to an end, why can't we do it faster or quicker," stated Margolin.[74] He and the others were constantly questioning the impact of the armed forces and anticipated a quicker end to the war.

When word came that the war in Europe had ended, on May 7, 1945, Margolin and the 107th still had work to do. Margolin was not able to leave Europe as fast as he would have liked to, instead he and the others had to stay at the hospital and continue to take care of the ill and wounded coming back from the various battlefronts. As the 107th disbanded their hospital, they were

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[67] Michael J. Lyons. World War II: A Short History, 4th Ed. (New Jersey: Pearson Education, 2004), 235.
[68] Ibid., 273.
[69] Margolin, 4 Oct 2005.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Margolin, 13 Oct 2005.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid.

not allowed to give anything to the English people from the hospital. "All
mattresses and bedding had to be burned, the metal ware broken up a
destroyed."[75] If the hospital gave these materials to the local people, it cou
have caused more damage than aided their economic rebuilding.

Margolin came back to the United States in 1945, on the *Queen Mary I*
the largest traveling ship at that point in the world. He was apart of first
shipments of troops back to United States soil from Europe. There was a
record of about twenty thousand troops aboard the ship. "We had to stay
above deck during the whole travel because we were traveling alone."[76] The
Queen Mary I was scheduled to come ashore in the New York Harbor and a
great celebration was planned. However, the ship arrived a day earlier than
expected, so Margolin and the rest of the passengers spent an additional night
aboard the ship. A day or so later, Margolin returned to the city of Detroit, a
night early and surprised his family.[77]

Although the war was over in Europe, Margolin's tour of duty was not.
He was home in Detroit for a month furlough and then was sent to Tacoma,
Washington to meet up with his new hospital unit.

> [Bridge General King] gave us the old huba huba bull and
> commended us on how well we did our job in the E.T.O.
> [European Theater of Operations] He also said that we got a
> superior rating for it and that the War Department has chosen us
> for further duty in the Pacific Theater![78]

There they began training on the wounds and diseases that were more
prevalent on the Pacific front. Margolin said, "We were finally given guns at
this point; we were taught how to use small firearms."[79] Since the Pacific
Theater differed greatly from the European Theater, the men were given
small weapons to defend themselves while in the Pacific. Margolin was
supposed to go to Japan and had joined a new hospital unit to go overseas to
Japan. Yet, once the atomic bombs were dropped in Hiroshima and Nagasaki,
the army broke up their hospital unit, and Margolin and others were sent to
Madigan General Hospital in Tacoma. When VJ Day occurred on August 14,
1945, Margolin was still in the service. "We got out by a point system. The

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[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Albert M. Margolin. Personal Letter to Beth Weiner. 6 Aug 1945.
[79] Margolin, 13 Oct 2005.

more points you had the earlier you got out,"[80] explained Margolin. The medics were the last discharged because of the influx of injured soldiers coming back from the various fronts still needed medical attention and care. He was finally discharged from the hospital unit, yet he still had his job and responsibilities in Tacoma at the hospital. "We still had to report every day to the hospital itself."[81] Sometimes they assisted in the operating rooms while at other times they worked in the various departments of the hospital.

In April 1946, Margolin was officially released from duty in Washington. He arrived back in Detroit at the Michigan Central Depot, on a Friday night, surprising his family and Beth. "Everybody is happy to see you home, alive and healthy," stated Margolin.[82] Many of Margolin's friends and acquaintances did come back; very few were actually killed in the war. However, the only thing on Margolin's mind, when he returned from war was getting married to Beth.

> This thing is holding you back from your own life, there are personal things that you have to accomplish that you want to accomplish. And here you have to settle back and do what's right for yourself and service to your country.[83]

Margolin had told Beth before he initially left that if anything happened to him, if he was maimed or injured in any way, he would not come back and she was to find someone else to marry.

Margolin was more fortunate than some other young men and women returning from the service. His brother-in-law, Harley, owned his own business, an auto-parts company and Margolin was able to secure a position working for him. He began working two weeks after returning from Washington. Margolin, with his wedding coming up quickly, worked hard at his new job earning sixty dollars a week, saving most of it for his future. On November 20, 1946, Margolin married his sweetheart Beth Weiner in Detroit and began accomplishing his personal goals of establishing a family and working hard to create a better life for his family.

The war made a great impact on Margolin. Since he was in his early twenties when he was discharged from the army, he found a new purpose in life. "You found how good life is, the things you can accomplish by learning and the experiences in your life," stated Margolin.[84] He wanted to find a

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[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Ibid.

decent job and immediately marry Beth and begin his family. Margolin never used the GI Bill.[85] After his wedding, Margolin took the time to look into various medical schools and how long it would take and what he would have to accomplish. Margolin said, "It was taking me off into another train of thought."[86] In reality, he wanted to start a family and felt he had wasted too much time already by being in the service. Margolin believes, if he was exposed to more things, and understood what was going on, he would have stayed in the service or accepted his discharge and gone on to college.[87] "I should have gone to school, beyond just playing soldier," declared Margolin.[88]

After World War II, Margolin did not see the events in the aftermath of the war as extremely important at the time. He heard about the Nuremburg trials, but at the time they were not very important. "It was a little bit beyond what our interests were perhaps, maybe other people felt it was much more important to them, it wasn't to me at the time," replied Margolin. [89] He and many others wanted to see justice brought to those who committed the atrocities against the European Jewish population. The war became a necessity; Japan had attacked the United States. Margolin said, "We had to take care of our people, take care of the people overseas that were suffering."[90] Looking back on his experiences, Margolin feels that entering the service when he did was the right thing for him at the time.[91]

Margolin wanted a better life for his children than he had. So, he left the auto-parts company after three years employment to go into business with his father-in-law, Alexander Weiner. They opened the Envoy Bar in downtown Detroit, in December 1949. Margolin and Weiner owned the business for ten years, until they decided it was not as successful as other ventures could be.[92] The bar was a better living than the auto-parts business, yet Margolin worked every night and was not able to see his family as much as he wanted to. During this time, Beth and Albert had three children, Leda (born in 1949), Andrea (born in 1951), and Michele (born in 1953). He then bought Livonia True Value Hardware in 1961 and created a successful business. With the hardware store, Margolin was able to limit his time spent

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[85] He did in fact keep the insurance policy also offered to veterans. Margolin, 13 Oct 2005.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Ibid.
[92] Ibid.

at work, yet work was and still is always on his mind.[93] However, when looking back on his life, Margolin thinks that he could have done better; there was still more he could have done to make his and his children's lives better.[94]

Coming from immigrant parents, Margolin wanted more for his children. His parents were hardworking people, although they never owned a home. Margolin prides himself in the fact that he and Beth have owned five homes over the course of their marriage: from a small house on Dexter in Detroit, to Radcliff in Oak Park, to Sharon Meadows in Southfield, to their current home in Farmington Hills.[95] As his children were growing up, Margolin wanted to be more involved in their lives, to instill the values that he held so close to his heart, in them. Margolin stated he wanted to "instill the value of bettering themselves."[96]

Achieving middle class status became important for many American Jews during the 1950s. "American Jews participated avidly in the rush to the nation's suburban community."[97] Before the war, many American Jews were practicing Orthodox Judaism yet during the post-war era, there was a general decline of practice. As American Jews became more "Americanized" and assimilated into American culture, they began to lose their ties to the Jewish community. The return of demobilized soldiers after World War II brought about a lesser observance of the details of Jewish law.[98] However, out of all the denominations of Judaism in America, the Conservative movement experienced rapid growth in the post-war era. "…it found a way to strike a balance between tradition and innovation, between commitment to Jewish law and the realities of postwar Jewish life."[99] Many American Jews found that the synagogue became their ties to the Jewish community. The synagogue, before was just a house of prayer, now became the center of Jewish cultural life as well. Never before had so many Jewish children gone to religious school, and the various denominations seen an influx in youth programs and adult social groups.[100] It was during this time that Jewish summer camps also became very popular. The Conservative Movement's Ramah camps, in 1961, had to turn down three thousand children because of

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[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Margolin, 13 Oct 2005.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Diner, 260.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibid., 299.
[100] Ibid, 261.

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a lack of space.[101] Ramah camps and others grew in popularity over the years following World War II and continue to be a place where Jewish children of all denominations go to practice Judaism and learn about culture and traditions.[102]

Judaism has also played an important role in Margolin's life. He was raised in an Orthodox household, where his mother kept the laws of Kashrut.[103] When he married, neither he nor Beth wanted to stay within the Orthodox movement. "Our choices weren't limited," said Margolin. [104] They tried various synagogues, including a Reform temple right before their eldest daughter Leda was born.[105] They finally settled on the Conservative movement and a synagogue, Congregation B'nai Moshe. They both came from kosher homes so deciding on keeping kosher was not going to be a problem. "…except I wanted a fry pan specifically for bacon in the house."[106] So the decision was made that either they keep kosher completely or do not do it at all, because Margolin wanted the "bacon fry pan", so today they do not have a kosher home. [107]

This shift in religious practice in Margolin's life and in the rest of the American Jewish population did not affect their memorializing of the Holocaust. "…the reading, intended for home use at Passover Seders, linked the almost universally observed family ritual with the uprising that had taken place in the Warsaw Ghetto on Passover eve in 1943."[108] This memorial is just one example of the many memorials that began to take form throughout post war America. However, the term, "the Holocaust" was not given to the events that surrounded World War II until the late 1960s.[109] The Holocaust had a great impact on Margolin. Since the majority of his family lived in Poland during the time of Nazi occupation, they all succumbed to the terrible fate of the other six million plus Jews.[110]

Margolin stated, "Everybody has their own responsibility to their family, there could be much more of a responsibility to the people that surround you."[111] Margolin has strove to keep his family close throughout his

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[101] Ibid., 299.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Kashrut laws are the dietary laws that prohibit certain foods from one's diet (i.e. Pork products), and the mixing of milk and meat products within the same meal.
[104] Margolin 13 Oct 2005.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Coincidentally, Margolin has never bought or cooked bacon in the house since they were married fifty-nine years ago.
[108] Diner, 262.
[109] Ibid, 265.
[110] Margolin, 13 Oct 2005.
[111] Ibid.

life. Margolin demonstrates this philosophy through weekly Sunday morning bagel deliveries, Sunday evening dinners, and making the effort to stay very involved in his children and grandchildren's lives.[112] He finds that continuing traditions is a way to keep the memory of those in his family that perished in the Holocaust and the memory of his parents, Harry and Sarah alive.

"American Jews believed that in some way their fate and that of the Jewish state had been bound together by the Holocaust."[113] American Jews greatly supported the creation of the State of Israel. Pouring money, time, and effort into the various Israel support organizations, these individuals were committed to seeing Israel's survival. Beyond financial assistance, Jewish organizations across America found ways to work Israel into their formal programming.[114] "Synagogues, federations, and Jewish clubs of various kinds organized trips to Israel, often referred to as 'missions,' for every possible constituency: families, couples, teenagers, singles, non-Jewish public officials, college students, even the Christian clergy."[115] Albert and Beth were fortunate enough to travel to Israel about twenty years ago. At the time, Margolin was hesitant to go, for fear of the violence, but Beth was able to convince him. When they returned to the United States, Margolin was ready to go back.[116] Israel had a great impact on him, since then only two of his grandchildren have had the opportunity to travel to Israel. Yet he has encouraged them to experience all they can while there, even at times when the situation between Israelis and Palestinians has not been as safe as he would like.[117]

Coming from an immigrant family, Albert Margolin encompasses the dreams and hopes of a first generation American Jew. His parents instilled the values of hard work and determination in him at a very young age. During World War II he demonstrated a committed attitude towards helping others and bettering himself. Margolin continued this attitude throughout the rest of his life. He strove to create a better life for himself and better opportunities for his three daughters and son-in-laws, nine grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. His dedication to his work and family is also influenced by his affiliation with Judaism and the importance of Judaism in his life.

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[112] Ibid.
[113] Diner, 321.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Ibid., 325.
[116] Margolin, 13 Oct 2005.
[117] Ibid.

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The Rise and Fall of Black Bottom, 1914-1951: A Social, Cultural and Political Analysis of an African American Community

JEREMY WILLIAMS

INTRODUCTION

Today, driving through the tattered and busted remains of lower East Detroit, one might never realize that there was once a place there called Black Bottom[1] where blacks could go for a fancy dinner and an elegant evening of top-notch entertainment. A small commercial stretch along Hastings Street, in Black Bottom, had been popular since the 1890s when it was populated with Italian and Jewish immigrants. However, by the 1940s this widely known strip along Hastings, bounded by Vernor to the north, Gratiot/Madison to the south, Hastings to the east, and John R to the west, would become the center of black nightlife with grocery stores, pool halls, bowling alleys, hotels, restaurants, nightclubs, and music stores. Peggy A. Moore, former patron of Paradise Valley[2] and founder of the Detroit Black Writers Guild, saw Paradise Valley as a place of black enterprise, community, and solidarity, noting that Paradise Valley was a "Black Mecca. . .[that] attracted more visitors to her doorstep than did Greek Town or China Town during the same period. . . Businesses flourished. . .all of these businesses were solvent, meaning that they operated profitably."[3] Like spaces in other cities, Black Bottom also had its troubles and woes. However, it was the challenges confronting Black Bottom that worked to turn it into a strong and viable community.

Black Bottom was particularly unique in the way that it formed as a community and why it ultimately collapsed, leaving its residents to continue their search for an explanation for Black Bottom's grim and unjust fate. It has been nearly half a century since the demise of Black Bottom, but former residents, like Alice Newman, Helen Nuttall Brown, and Peggy Moore cannot seem to reconcile why "they [urban planning officials] broke up the

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[1] The area had been known by early settlers as Black Bottom because of the rich topsoil. Eventually the area became inhabited by European immigrants (Greeks, Jews, and Poles). As the racial composition of the near east side changed, the term "Black Bottom" eventually came to include the entire black community. See Richard Bak, *Stearnes And The Detroit Stars: The Negro League in Detroit, 1919-1933*, (Detroit, Michigan; Wayne State University Press, 1994): 28.

[2] Paradise Valley was a euphemism for the Hastings Street entertainment district. Its boundaries, as listed in the Detroit Free Press, October 27th, 1938, were Medbury and Madison on the North and South, Russell and John R. Street on the East and West. (Information taken from map from Burton Historical Collections, Detroit Public Library. See appendix for map of Paradise Valley.)

[3] Peggy A. Moore, *Paradise Valley Days: A Photo Album Poetry Book of Black Detroit, 1930s to 1950's*, (Detroit; Detroit Black Writer's Guild, Inc., 1998): vi.

community. They broke up the business."[4] In order to understand why people like Newman felt Black Bottom to be something more than "an area [of] densely packed tenements and visible poverty, plagued by disease and crime,"[5] we must understand how blacks settled into this small ethnic enclave and made a life for themselves, and the causes of its unfortunate demise.

This essay critically examines Black Bottom during its formative years between 1914 and 1951 because by this time, the racial composition of the area had changed significantly, and Black Bottom had undergone significant economic charge due to World War One. After several decades of struggling to make a life for themselves, Black Bottom residents had reached a social, cultural and political zenith. 1941 marked the point of decline for this once bustling arena when Mayor Jeffries marked the area for demolition and urban renewal. In an effort to understand this shaping and formidable decade, the following questions help frame my analysis: How far back does the history of blacks reach? When did blacks begin to occupy the area known as Black Bottom? What were some of the historical causes that led blacks to migrate to the area? Who were Black Bottom's leaders? What were some of the major social organizations, cultural institutions, and self help efforts that facilitated the settlement of Black Bottom newcomers? What was the quality of life like for blacks in the area? Where did they work? How did they spend their leisure time? How did they build community? Were there any hospitals, police stations, or schools in Black Bottom? How did the city control crime and vice in Black Bottom?

WHAT WERE SOME OF THE HISTORICAL CAUSES THAT LED BLACKS TO MIGRATE TO THE AREA?

In 1870, approximately 774 Blacks lived within the geographical boundaries of the Black Bottom area.[6] The area, whose streets followed the property lines of the original French "ribbon farms" had been known by early settlers as Black Bottom because of the rich topsoil. The area had been originally settled by European immigrants (Greeks, Jews, and Poles). As the racial composition of the near-east side changed, the term "Black Bottom" eventually came to include the entire Black community.[7] During the 1880s, Black Bottom gained a reputation as a district of vice and crime. Yet soon after, this vice district of broken down houses, flophouses, brothels, and saloons became a social center for people of all colors. By the end of the

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[4] Elaine Moon Latzman, Untold Tales, Unsung Heroes: An Oral History of Detroit's African American Community, 1918-1967, (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1994): 74.
[5] Thonas Sugrue, *The Origins of Urban Crisis.* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996): 37.
[6] Bak, *Turkey Stearnes And The Detroit Stars: The Negro League in Detroit, 1919-1933,* 27, 72.
[7] Ibid, 28.

decade, the area, also known as the Potomac Quarter, was slowly populated by small factories and businesses.[8] These factories employed Black and White residents of Black Bottom (racism in Detroit factories did not really become an issue until the great migration. At this time Whites began to fear that the inadequate housing would cause Blacks to move into their neighborhoods). In addition to factory employment, Blacks were employed as stewards, bellmen, domestics, cooks, laborers, porters, barbers, dressmakers, and few worked as lawyers, engineers and sailors.[9] In 1915, there were fewer than 7 thousand Blacks in city of Detroit, most of them concentrated in the lower eastside area – bounded by Brush, Leland, Hastings, and Macomb (i.e. Black Bottom).[10] Between 1920 and 1930, the Black population grew to 120,066, accounting for 7.7 percent of the total Detroit population.[11]

The Great Migration provided southern blacks the freedom and opportunity to achieve their share of the American dream.[12] World War I generated great employment opportunities, as well as a chance for Black southerners to escape the pervasive and unchecked cruelties of rampant racism and discrimination. For some Blacks, leaving behind the wretchedness of southern life for the prosperous opportunities in the North had metaphorical meanings of leaving a hellacious situation for a heavenly one. The following poem written in 1917 reveals such:

Huh! De wurl' ain't flat
An' de wurl' ain't roun'
Jes' one long strip
Hangin' up an' down.
Since Norf is up,
An' Souf is down,
An' Hebben is up,
I'm upward boun.'[13]

This is not to suggest that the North was free of violent racism and discrimination, the Ossian Sweet case[14], for instance, would refute such a

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[8] Ibid.

[9] Burton Historical Collections, Detroit Public Library, in local history file (E & M 74D4 325. 26, Box 3).

[10] David Allan Levine, "'Expecting The Barbarians': Race Relations And Social Control, Detroit, 1915-1925" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1970), 104; Marc Belding Anderson, "Racial Discrimination in Detroit: A Spatial Analysis of Racism" (M.A. Thesis, Wayne State University, 1969), 33.

[11] Anderson, "Racial Discrimination in Detroit: A Spatial Analysis of Racism," 78.

[12] Darlene Clark Hine, Black Migration to the Urban Midwest: The Gender Dimension, 1915—1945," in *The Great Migration in Historical Perspective: New Dimensions of Race, Class, and Gender,*" ed. Joe W. Trotter, jr. (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), 127.

[13] Dewey H. Palmer, "Moving North: Migration of Negroes during World War I," *Phylon* 28 (1960): 57.

[14] Ossian Sweet was a young black doctor who bought a house in a white working class district of Detroit. Fearing that real estate values would fall, Sweets angry white neighbors gathered into a violent mob with intentions to eject Sweet and his family. The local police fail to act of Sweet's behalf, shots are fired from the Sweet house, a man is killed, and the doctor is arrested. A highly publicized and complicated legal-political process follows, and Sweet is

claim. As a matter of fact, an examination of some of the reasons that the National Urban League opened the Detroit branch, as well as the collective efforts of the Detroit Urban League reveals the reality of Northern racism. Even the earlier Detroit race riots of 1833, 1839, 1850, demonstrated for Black Detroiters the racism of Northern Whites. The infamous riot of 1863 sent White mobs into the Black section of Black Bottom looting and pillaging Black homes and businesses, before setting the property ablaze. On Layfayette Street, houses "were literally sacked of their contents, and the furniture piled in the middle of the street and burned."[15] However, the North did provide some social, cultural, and economic advantages previously unknown to most southern Blacks. Therefore, the war became a major pulling force of southern Blacks into the thriving northern industrial centers, thus changing the social landscape of both the North and the South.[16] The exodus changed backs from a rural people to an urban people.[17] The North provided the poor, rural, uneducated Black southerner with vast economic opportunities in the rapidly growing urban metropolis. Dr. Robert R. Morton of Tuskegee Institute, lecturing on "The effects of Negro Migration on the South," provided reason to this great historical moment in economic terms. He noted that Northern prosperity had "offered larger opportunities" to the Black man, and that "[p]eople, regardless of race will always go where they think there are opportunities."[18] Another reason why many Blacks fled to the North was because the southern economy had suffered greatly due to the drought and floods, low cotton prices, and the boll-weevil.[19] Southern Whites lamented the loss of cheap Black labor for their farm fields; "There has been

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ultimately acquitted. See Kevin Boyle, "Arc of Justice: A Saga of Race, Civil Rights, and Murder in the Jazz Age" (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2004).
[15] Baltimore Daily Gazette, March 10, 1863, p. 4.
[16] Although it is not the focus of this study to linger on the gender perspective of the great migration, it is important to note that, while the black exodus most involved black males, there were also a variety of other factors that led black women to migrate to the North. Historian Darlene Clark Hine adds a "gender dimension" to the dialogue on the "temporal and spatial movement" of blacks from the South to the North:

It is clear that more attention needs to be directed toward the noneconomic motives propelling black female migration. Many black women quit the South out of a desire to achieve personal autonomy and to escape from sexual exploitation both within and outside of their families and from sexual abuse at the hands of southern whites as well as black men. The combined influence of domestic violence and economic oppression is key to understanding the hidden motivation informing major protest and migratory movements in Afro-American history. See Darlene Clark Hine, Black Migration to the Urban Midwest: The Gender Dimension, 1915—1945," in *The Great Migration in Historical Perspective: New Dimensions of Race, Class, and Gender*," ed., Joe W. Trotter, jr. (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), 130.

[17] George E. Haynes, *Negro Newcomers in Detroit*, (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1969): 8.
[18] Detroit Urban League Papers, Michigan Historical Collections, Bentley Historical Library, Ann Arbor, Mich. (hereafter cited as, DULP-MHC), Executive Secretary general file File 4, 1916-50; roll 1.
[19] The boll weevil is a cotton-eating pest that destroyed most of the cotton crop during this time, greatly affecting the southern economy.

lots of darkies left here and nearly all the good ones is gone," complained one White Alabama farmer.[20] In turn, the availability of jobs for agricultural workers declined significantly, sending many unemployable Blacks to the North in search of jobs. Former Black Bottom resident, James E. Cummings remembers when

> I came with my family. My father…couldn't find employment in the South… Detroit at the time was noted for automobiles, paints and stoves… The Urban League helped find a home for us on East Congress Street after the whole family was together. Later it became known as Black Bottom.[21]

Also, Blacks in the "Jim Crow" South, accustomed to the daily and vicious reality of racism, discrimination, White mob violence, disenfranchisement, poor housing, and an unfair justice system, were easily tempted by the North's promise of chance and opportunity.[22] The following letter from a desperate Black southerner seeking a better life in the North illustrates both the urgency of the northern labor crisis and the desire of Blacks to respond to the labor demand, as well as the social climate of fear, hopelessness, meaninglessness, that permeated Black life in the South Greenwood, Miss., Apr. 22nd, 1917.

> Sir: I noticed in the Defender about receiving some information from you about positions up there or rather work and I am very anxious to know what the chances are for business men. I am very anxious to leave the South on account of my children but my husband doesn't seem to think that he can succeed there in business, he is a merchant and also knows the barber trade what are the chances for either? Some of our folks down here have the idea that this Northern movement means nothing to any body but those who go out and labor by the day. I am willing to work myself to get a start. Tell me what we could really do. I will do most anything to get our family out of *Bam*. Please let this be confidential.[23]

Northern employment agencies were often inundated with such pleas from southern Blacks seeking employment opportunities in the burgeoning northern industries.

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[20] Levine, "'Expecting The Barbarians': Race Relations And Social Control, Detroit, 1915-1925," 104.

[21] Latzman, *Untold Tales, Unsung Heroes: An Oral History of Detroit's African American Community, 1918-1967*, (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1994): 33.

[22] Ibid., 7.

[23] Emmett J. Scott, "Letters of Negro Migrants of 1916-1918," The *Journal of Negro History* 4, (1919): 311-12.

Between 1914 and 1920, Detroit's Black population rose from 5,751 to 41,532.[24] Before the war increased the demand for labor, Blacks had been unable to obtain employment in certain northern occupations due to racism and discrimination. However, employment agencies now found it difficult to find Black labor (partly because the majority of the total population of Blacks still resided in the South[25]). This contemporary news article explains the ironic crisis

> Formerly, the big contractor in the North could pick a few hunkies from a long line of eager applicants for work. He could get Poles, Italians, Greeks, in any number... To-day he is willing to take Black men, and finds it hard to get even them.[26]

However, by 1927 the importance of Black labor diminished.[27] In Detroit there were only 14,454 Blacks employed, compared to 20,404 the previous year.[28] (It was not as though Blacks could logically return to the agricultural fields of the South because the labor shortages in the South were soon replenished by White labor[29].) This economic spin ushered in the depression for Black Bottom residents, most of whom obviously depended on the economic security of Henry Ford's lucrative and alluring promise.[30]

The "country-wide collapse"[31] of the open stock market in October of 1929 shook the economic base of Black Bottom's working-class community even more. The once stable Black employment rate plummeted, sending Black Bottom residents into a Depression and to the City Relief offices, while industry analysts theorized the effects of the stock market crash, and whether or not "our normal purchasing power [had] been appreciably impaired."[32] By November of that year, employment bureaus throughout the nation reported that the number of job applicants that actually obtained employment had

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[24] Henderson H. Donald, "The Effects of the Negro Migration on the North," The *Journal of Negro History* 6 (1921): 432.
[25] Charles Luther Fry, "The Negro in the United States-A Statistical Statement," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, The American Negro,* 140 (1928): 30.
[26] Donald, "The Effects of the Negro Migration on the North," The *Journal of Negro History* 6 (1921): 435.
[27] Charles S. Johnson, "Incidence Upon the Negro," *The American Journal of Sociology* 40 (1935): 737.
[28] Letter to Glen Carlson, November 29, 1929 in Community Organization Department File 8, 1916-50 DULP-MHC; roll 35.
[29] Johnson, "Incidence Upon the Negro," 737.
[30] On January 5, 1914, Henry Ford announced a new minimum wage of five dollars per eight-hour day, in addition to a profit-sharing plan. See Daniel Gross, "Henry Ford And The Model T," in *Forbes Greatest Business Stories of All Time* (Byron Preiss Visual Publications, Inc., and Forbes Inc. 1996), 74. Also, for a penetrating discussion on the nature of black work under Ford from the mid 1910s through the 1920s, see Joyce Shaw Peterson, "Black Automobile Workers in Detroit, 1910-1930, The Journal of Negro History, Vol. 64 (1979).
[31] *Chicago Daily Tribune,* 1929, 2d Big Slump; Day's Loss Set at 14 Billions. October 29, 1.
[32] Detroit Free Press, 1929, Business in U. S. On Sound Basis, Buying Power Same as Before, Radio Talk asserts. October 30, 1, 11.

declined significantly. Industrial plants in Chicago sent workers home daily.[33] Although Blacks were typically the first to suffer any employment crisis, Whites too found themselves joining the ranks of the dispossessed and unemployed. In response to a letter from Glen Carlson on the question of Black employment, a pessimistic John Dancy summed up the urban crisis in black and white:

> Just now Detroit is in the throes of a very serious unemployment situation. Thousands of men both White and colored have been let out from the factories and as a result the City's Relief Agencies are up to their necks in trying to devise ways and means for taking care of those who have become dependent... Negroes have felt this unemployment slack more than have Whites. Although it is safe to say that both have been hard hit. Nobody seems to know just when there will be a resumption of industrial activities, but I am very much afraid that 1930 is going to be rather dull.[34]

By 1930, there were 120,066 Blacks reported in the city of Detroit, most of whom were settled in a thirty square block area east of Woodward Avenue called "Paradise Valley." In 1932, newly elected Franklin D. Roosevelt's "New Deal" offered hope for Black people by "promising to put [them] to work."[35] The New Deal also purported to include Blacks in "programs designed to relieve the special problems created by the Depression"[36] For example, the Sojourner Truth Homes would help ease the tension in Black Bottom's housing crisis (more on this later). But two years later Detroit's Department of Public Welfare reported that 29.6 percent of its Black population was on the welfare rolls.[37]

By 1940, the "Annual Report of the Detroit Urban League" approximated Detroit's Black population at 145,000.[38] World War II, as well as economic and social tensions in the South continued to send Black southerners to the North in search for a better way of life. The Northern factories offered the kind of wages that most Blacks could not receive in the

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[33] Special Bulletin issued by the "Department of Industrial Relations of the Chicago Urban League," on November 25, 1929 in Budget and Financial Records File 5, 1916-50 DULP-MHC; roll 35.

[34] Letter to Glen Carlson, November 29, 1929 in Community Organization Department File 8, 1916-50 DULP-MHC; roll 35.

[35] Robert C. Weaver, "Detroit and Negro Skill," *Phylon* 4 (1943): 132; Gary Jerome Hunter, "'Don't Buy Where You Can't Work': Black Urban Boycott Movements During the Depression, 1929-1941," (PhD. Diss., University of Michigan, 1977), 202.

[36] Christopher G. Wye, "The New Deal and the Negro Community: Toward a Broader Conceptualization," *The Journal of American History* 59, (1972): 621.

[37] Johnson, "Incidence Upon the Negro," 740.

[38] Annual Report of the Detroit Urban League, 1939, issued on March 1940, in Executive Secretary general file, File 8, 1916-50 DULP-MHC; roll 35.

South. Although the workplace was often a hazardous environment for the Black migrant worker, it was the financial rewards coupled with the steady and consistent work schedule that made Blacks leave the South. Detroit's burgeoning war industries offered the kind of employment opportunities that provided Blacks enough money for a decent living and to purchase a home. As Detroit's "emerging Black industrial working class"[39] continued to grow, this meant that the "Black Bottom" community grew, creating the need for extra housing. Because of unchecked discrimination in housing in Detroit, Black social and cultural organizations became inundated with the demands of Black migrants seeking accommodations in employment and housing.

WHAT WERE SOME OF THE MAJOR SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS, CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS, AND SELF HELP EFFORTS THAT FACILITATED THE SETTLEMENT OF BLACK BOTTOM NEWCOMERS?

Throughout the history of Black struggle in America, Blacks have had to depend on their own creativity and ingenuity. Long before World War I, the Black church was a key component in political, economic, religious and educational dimensions of Black life. To aid in the establishment of their communities, Blacks created social organizations, cultural institutions, and fashioned self-help strategies that helped sustain Blacks in their struggle for a better life. With Black Bottom's population growing rapidly as a result of the burgeoning war industries, Black leadership faced the challenge of facilitating the assimilation of the rural, uneducated, southern agricultural worker into the expanding urban industrial metropolis. The Black church served as a vital resource center for Detroit and Black Bottom's Black community. Detroit's Black migration dilemma encouraged some Black ministers to start churches.[40] Therefore, any examination of Black social, political, and cultural strivings must begin with the Black church. By 1941, Detroit's Second Baptist Church, Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME), and the Detroit Urban League proved to be major resource centers for the Black Bottom community.

Second Baptist Church

In 1836 thirteen former slaves grew disenchanted and dissatisfied with the blatant discrimination and inequality of the White established First

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[39] Thomas, *Life For Us Is What We Make It: Building Black Community in Detroit, 1915-1945,* 47.
[40] Benjamin E. Mays, *The Negro's Church,* (New York, Institute of Social and Religious Research, 1933): 34.

Baptist Church of Detroit and organized the Second Baptist Church.[41] Second Baptist Church is the oldest Black congregation in Black Bottom, and it led the way in "planting and nurturing the seeds of Black social consciousness and self help."[42] From its beginnings, the church has occupied a prominent place in Detroit's Black community, and served as a meeting place for early prominent abolitionists such as Frederick Douglass, John Brown, and Sojourner Truth.[43] In 1839 Second Baptist Church established the city's first school for Black children, and in 1841 its first pastor, the Reverend William C. Monroe, was a noted anti-slavery activist.

The most important contribution that Second Baptist made to the Black Bottom community was preceding the Detroit Urban League in settling Black migrants. In 1914, when Black migrants flocked to Detroit for Henry Ford's five-dollar-a-day offer, Reverend Robert L. Bradby decided that the church needed to minister to the needs of the growing community.[44] This meant providing food, shelter, and clothing to the needy, and working in community with other churches to implement self-help programs along with social service offices in their churches to aid migrants in finding jobs, food, and recreation. Before the Detroit Urban League was founded, Bradby's Second Baptist Church met migrants at the train stations and assisted them in adjusting to urban life. Church officials aided homeless Black girls, offered educational facilities staffed with trained teachers, and raised several hundreds of thousands of dollars to better the lives of Black Bottom residents.[45]

Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church

In 1839 a group of Black Detroit citizens founded the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church. The church initially held meetings in a hall that was donated by the Detroit Common Council before eventually building its own in the 1840s. In 1841 the church assumed its present name and organization. From its inception, the church would effectively serve Black Bottom's needy residents in a number of ways - and even provided a school for Black children, an agency to assist southern migrants, and a bureau for labor and housing.

[41] Ernest G. Bell, "History of the Black Church in Detroit as a Study in American Public Address" (PhD diss., Wayne State University, 1987), 150.
[42] Thomas, Life For Us Is What We Make It: Building Black Community in Detroit, 1915-1945, 175.
[43] Bell, "History of the Black Church in Detroit as a Study in American Public Address," 151.
[44] Norman Kenneth Miles, "Home At Last: Urbanization of Black Migrants In Detroit" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1978), 160.
[45] Thomas, Life For Us Is What We Make It: Building Black Community in Detroit, 1915-1945, 176.

By 1941 Bethel Church had become a vital tool in the Black Bottom community.

Bethel AME Minister, Reverend William H. Peck, and his wife, Mrs. Fannie Peck started the Booker T. Washington Trade Association (BTWTA) and the Housewives League of Detroit (HWLD). The BTWTA concentrated on Black ownership, and as a result became an inspiration to the Black business community.[46] By stressing the economic power that Black housewives possessed as consumers, the BTWTA aided the Black Bottom community's economic growth by stressing the importance of patronizing Black owned businesses and doing whatever was necessary to support Black economic welfare.[47] Dr. Austin Curtis, a former member of the BTWTA remembered the effective strategies of the HWLD:

> The Housewives League was successful in promoting Black businesses.... These women would go to the merchants and ask for Black products that were produced by Blacks. If they wouldn't carry them, then they would see that people wouldn't buy there any longer. It was effective.[48]

The BTWTA played a vital role in Black economic empowerment by supporting Black business growth. The BTWTA saw the importance of Blacks owning business that they could in turn offer employment to other Blacks. Former Black Bottom businessman and resident, Sunnie Wilson, remembers the positive impact the BTWTA had on Black Bottom's Black business community:

> By the time I settled in Detroit, I was pleased to see Black businessmen coming together to build a strong community. Various entrepreneurs joined together in Black business association. The Booker T. Washington Trade Association, founded by Reverend William Peck of the A.M.E. Church, and another that held Thursday luncheons were especially effective in the community. Eventually, I became a member of both those organizations. The Thursday meetings assisted Black professionals finding work. For example, if a real-estate man needed work, the organization would help him find the proper business connections.[49]

[46] Latzman, *Untold Tales, Unsung Heroes: An Oral History of Detroit's African American Community, 1918-1967*, 88.
[47] Thomas, *Life For Us Is What We Make It: Building Black Community in Detroit, 1915-1945*, 215.
[48] Latzman, *Untold Tales, Unsung Heroes: An Oral History of Detroit's African American Community, 1918-1967*, 254.
[49] Sunnie Wilson and John Cohassey, *Toast of The Town: The Life and Times of Sunnie Wilson,* (Detroit; Wayne State University Press, 1998), 54.

The BTWTA and the HWLD were driven by the desire to strengthen the economic power of the Black community in efforts to build a secure community. To do this, they implemented and fostered the self-help philosophy, raised social consciousness, and promoted racial solidarity.[50] The HWLD's Garvey-like philosophy—"let's-keep-our-money-in-our-own-communities"—enabled Black consumers in Paradise Valley (Black Bottom's commercial district) to build a strong and economically viable community, while establishing "an impressive place for themselves in the state's economy."[51] Both groups forged alliances with other Black institutions to design ways to develop a strong Black business community.[52]

By 1945 Bethel had become a model in the Black self-help tradition.[53] The church Mortuary and Health Reserve department offered Black Bottom residents death and sick benefits, and if a family could not afford burial costs, the church's Benefit Association would issue a check for $75.00 to the surviving family members.[54] Some critics of the Black church would argue that industrial paternalism controlled and exploited the Black church,[55] but others would argue that the church has always been an important institution in the Black community.

The Detroit Urban League

In June 1916, National Urban League sociologist Forrester Washington arrived in Detroit to conduct a survey of "general social conditions" to determine the needs of Detroit's growing Black community. Immediately afterwards, Washington arranged meetings with Detroit city officials to discuss the status of Blacks in the areas of employment, health, and recreation, as well as crime and vice conditions, and child care facilities. For instance, Washington contacted Detroit school superintendent, Charles E. Chadsey, requesting information on the status of Black students. He instructed his colleague, Boyd Fisher, "to send out a questionnaire to practically every manufacturing and mercantile establishment in the city,

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[50] Thomas, *Life For Us Is What We Make It: Building Black Community in Detroit, 1915-1945*, 221

[51] Darlene Clark Hine, *Hinesight: Black Women and The Re-Construction of American History* (Bloomington and Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1994): 60.

[52] Thomas, *Life For Us Is What We Make It: Building Black Community in Detroit, 1915-1945*, 221.

[53] Richard W. Thomas, *The State of Black Detroit: Building From Strength*, (Detroit: The Detroit Urban League, Inc., 1987), 11.

[54] Arthur Randall Jr., ed., *One Hundred Years at Bethel Detroit* (Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, 1941): 32. Burton Historical Collections, Detroit Public Library, in local history file (E & M 74D4 325. 26, Box 3).

[55] It is true that white captains of industry often used the black church as hiring agencies, on the grounds that black preachers would be better able to weed out the undesirable elements of the black community. See Horace White, "Who Owns the Negro Churches?" *The Christian Century*, (Feb 1938): 176.

requesting information concerning their Negro employees, such as wages, working conditions, etc." Specifically, Washington wanted to gather as much information as possible on Black life in Black Bottom because he knew that this area of Detroit had the highest concentration of Blacks. And, as with most localities of this sort, this meant a higher likelihood of crime, vice, poverty, and "disorderly resorts."[56]

On July 18th 1916, Forrester B. Washington met with the St. Mark Brotherhood at the Bethel A. M. E. church to rally support for the new Detroit chapter of the Urban League.[57] Washington relayed his plans to assist Detroit social agencies with the settlement of Black migrants. At the conclusion of his speech, the congregation rose in applause as an expression of their solidarity and support.[58] The Detroit Urban League's (DUL) dual aim was to aid other city social organizations in the adjustment and settlement of Black migrants.[59] The League provided the newly arrived southern migrant with employment, shelter, and other valuable resources necessary for settlement into the burgeoning northern industrial metropolis.[60]

Between 1916 and 1917, the League showed consistent progress in areas of Black employment and recreation. Most all applicants were immediately placed in well-paid positions in the steel, automobile, cigar, and garment industries.[61] (By, 1918, the DUL was chiefly responsible for the successful placement of over 10,000 Blacks into housing and employment.)[62] In November of 1916, the DUL obtained a private loan of $500.00 for the procurement of a recreational facility to be housed in an abandoned building at Beaubien and Macomb Streets in Black Bottom.[63] The main purpose of

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[56] Report for the Affiliated Organization of Detroit, June 1916, given at board meeting on July 7, 1916 in Board of Directors Minutes and Reports, 1917, File 35, 1916-50 DULP-MHC; roll 1. As a trained Sociologist, Washington knew that racially restrictive real estate covenants would ensure that blacks would occupy the poorest area in the city, which always incorporated the vice district. One of the ways to combat this issue would be to develop better recreational outlets for blacks in Black Bottom. See Joe W. Trotter and Earl Lewis, *African Americans in the Industrial Age: A Documentary History, 1915-1945*, (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1996): 3.

[57] The "Urban League Movement" began to take form around 1905 in response to growing concerns in the interest of black migration. The League's mission was to aid black migrants in adjusting to industrial life, finding suitable housing, and "meeting recreational problems." By 1911, a group of influential and civic-minded blacks and whites consolidated their organizations, the Committee for Improving Industrial Conditions of Negroes in New York, the "Coordinating Agency," and the National League for the Protection of Colored Women, and – with white philanthropic support – formed the National League on Urban Conditions Among Negroes. See L. Hollingsworth Wood, "The Urban League Movement" *The Journal of Negro History* 9, (1924): 117-119.

[58] Report for the Affiliated Organization of Detroit, June 1916, given at board meeting on July 7, 1916 in Board of Directors Minutes and Reports, 1917, File 35, 1916-50 DULP-MHC; roll 1.

[59] Ibid.

[60] E. Franklin Frazier, *Black Bourgeosie.* (New York; The Free Press, 1957): 99.

[61] Report of Director to Monthly Meeting of Joint Committee of Detroit League on Urban Conditions Among Negroes, January 19, 1917, Board of Directors Minutes and Reports, 1917, File 35, 1916-50 DULP-MHC; roll 1.

[62] Hunter, "'Don't Buy Where You Can't Work': Black Urban Boycott Movements During the Depression, 1929-1941," 151.

[63] Report of Director to Monthly Meeting of Joint Committee of Detroit League on Urban Conditions Among Negroes, November 9, 1916, Board of Directors Minutes and Reports, 1916, File 25, 1916-50 DULP-MHC; roll 1.

recreation was to facilitate various forms of social exchange. This system of networking (in the form of dances, basketball games, and exercise classes) was not precarious because it served the purpose two-fold: 1) it allowed the League to monitor the ways in which idle time was spent in the Black community; 2) it allowed rural, uncultured class (noisy, rowdy, and uneducated) to mingle with the more socially experienced class.

The DUL also dealt with issues affecting all aspects of Black life in Black Bottom. The DUL often took on the role of family mediator, social worker, and relief agency. For example, in 1926 Florence Williams' husband deserted her and her five children, Mrs. Williams was forced to move in with her mother and two sisters at 3749 Riopelle Street in Black Bottom. The DUL sent out a social worker to help Mrs. Williams find food, clothes for her school-aged children, and employment. Another case involved a father living in squalor. In September 1926, Henry Sutton, a Briggs factory employee, was living in a three-room shack with his seven children. His wife had deserted him and their seven children five years earlier, leaving the father to care for the children with little money and no outside assistance. The children were malnourished, ill-clothed, and only two of the children had shoes. The DUL referred the case to the Chestnut Street Community Center, where the family received excellent care. The social worker also referred the case to the Board of Health and the Department of Public Welfare for further assistance.[64]

During the 1940s, the conditions of World War Two brought more Black migrants pouring into Detroit's urban metropolis. As a result, the DUL's workload increased significantly as it tried to obtain better housing, employment, and recreational opportunities for Black Bottom residents.[65] The war effort expanded the employment opportunities for many, and sent thousands of Blacks flooding the train depots of urban Detroit looking for jobs. They slept on floors and benches at the train stops, and even slept on park benches until the police department threatened them with jail time. They slept in overcrowded rooming houses, and were often exploited by greedy, uncompromising landlords. Very few migrants were lucky enough to find refuge with compassionate friends and neighbors.[66] The DUL rescued thousands of newly arrived migrants who had stepped off the train with neither friend nor family to aid them in their search for food, shelter, clothing

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[64] Report of a case that involved a destitute parent. Community Organization Department File, January 26, 1926, and October 1, 1926, Board of Directors Minutes and Reports, 1916, File 4, 1916-50 DULP-MHC; roll 3.

[65] Njere Wa Murage, "Organizational History of the Detroit Urban League, 1916-60," (PhD diss., Michigan State University, 1993), 349.

[66] Wilma Wood Henrickson, *Detroit Perspectives: Crossroads and Turning Points.* (Detroit; Wayne State University Press, 1991): 279.

and jobs. The DUL became the most important resource for Blacks migrating to the Black Bottom area.

In addition, the DUL created alliances and unions with outside resources and networked with other Black institutions, powerful and influential Whites, private and public agencies to for the sake of helping the Black community adjust to northern life.[67]

The Great Depression brought about new challenges for the DUL, resulting in both triumph and failure. The League suffered the loss of its employment agency, it failed to meet the goals of its Community Fund, and its staff faced necessary layoffs.[68] The League tried to resuscitate its fledgling image (among Blacks) by doing volunteer work, and organizing the Michigan People's Financial Corporation, which offered small loans to Blacks. Eventually, the endeavor failed.[69] The only program that seemed to bloom during the dry and dark days of the Depression was the Greener Pastures[70] project.

While it can be said that the League was both "obsessed ...with socializing the Black southern peasants," and helping them to adjusted to industrializing Detroit, nonetheless, the financial support received from such alliances were used to create a variety of programs which benefited Black Bottom residents, and helped to make raise the quality of life for Black children, in Black Bottom.[71] In addition to the Greener Pastures Camp, other programs included community centers, study clubs, reading rooms, and baby clinics. These programs were important to Black Bottom residents and their children because the programs exposed black bottom residents to the importance of Black community building, as well as things that many perhaps would have otherwise never known."[72]

WHAT WERE SOME OF THE MAJOR PROBLEMS THAT AFFECTED BLACK MIGRANTA IN BLACK BOTTOM?

There were many issues that affected Blacks migrating to Black Bottom between 1914 and 1951. As early as 1905 "socially minded men and women" in New York City organized the National Urban League and began to grapple with the unavoidable issues effecting Black migrants. Since the

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[67] Thomas, *Life For Us Is What We Make It: Building Black Community in Detroit, 1915-1945*, 87.

[68] Wa Murage, "Organizational History of the Detroit Urban League, 1916-60," 269.

[69] Ibid

[70] In 1931, the Urban League developed the Green Pastures Camp. It was a gift to the League from the Children's Fund of Michigan financed by Senator James Couzens. This was the first camp for black children in the State of Michigan. Some 15,000 children attended the camp through its three decades of operation. (http://www-personal.umich.edu/~const/629/greenpastures.html)

[71] Ibid., 57.

[72] Ibid., 81.

1850s the Black church had establish itself as an exemplary institution of social, political and cultural progress in the Black Bottom community. But institutions assisted other social agencies with matters of housing, employment training, recreational needs, "the protection of young Black girls coming from the South for domestic training," and the "industrial adjustment" of Black migrants in Black Bottom.[73] This section will address the major and historically significant struggles of the Black Bottom community between 1914 and 1951: racism and discrimination, the turbulent Depression era, and the perennial dilemma of inadequate housing.

Racism and Discrimination

Long before America admitted its national racial crisis,[74] Blacks had fully experienced racism and discrimination in every aspect of their lives. For Black Bottom residents, racism and discrimination had defined and shaped their economic opportunities, social and political relations, and their cultural development. For example, the founding of Second Baptist Church in 1836 was primarily the result of Whites' unwillingness to fully accept Blacks into their First Baptist Church.[75] Because of discrimination in public areas, Black Bottom residents were forced to create their own social and recreational outlets. Paradise Valley emerged out of the social, political, and cultural isolation of Blacks. John Dancy's Greener Pastures Camp for underprivileged Black youth was also created in response to racial prejudice. In his essay titled "Deluxe Summer Camp for Colored Children," Forrester B. Washington wrestled with the paradox of White racist sentiment:

True Detroit has its race prejudice and that is why "Green Pastures Camp" was established. Even the Christian Association Camps of Detroit do not take Negroes to camp along with White children but offer them a couple of weeks at the beginning or end of the season when it is almost too cool for real pleasure; nor has the largest summer camp for children in Michigan which is maintained by one of Detroit's daily newspapers ever admitted Negro children. But the liberality and fair-mindedness of such

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[73] Wood, "The Urban League Movement," 117, 119.

[74] Anderson, "Racial Discrimination in Detroit: A Spatial Analysis of Racism," 1.

[75] In *Before the Ghetto*, Katzman explains that Second Baptist Church:

Arose because the white First Baptist Church had failed to adequately and fairly serve the needs and interests of its black brethren... The major issue seemed to be the question of segregation; as long as blacks were confined to the gallery they felt excluded from the fellowship of the church. See Katzman, *Before The Ghetto: Black Detroit in Nineteenth Century*, 19-20.

men as Senator Couzens which made "Greener Pastures Camp" possible makes one forget the unpleasant side of the picture.[76]

In 1968, John F. Kain's interesting essay, "Housing Segregation, Negro Employment, and Metropolitan Decentralization," concluded that racial balkanization (discrimination in housing) greatly attributed to the high unemployment rate in the Black community.[77] Between 1914 and 1951 housing remained the primary issue for the Black Bottom community. In 1917 Detroit faced a serious wartime problem; an average of 100 to 200 Blacks flooded into the Detroit area daily. Since the European war stifled immigration, the industrial demand for unskilled labor placed a premium on Black migration. But when Blacks arrived in Detroit, they had nowhere to go for lodging. A 1919 survey noted "165,000 persons living in improper housing."[78] The following report highlights Detroit's housing crisis:

> [N]ot a single vacant house or tenement in the several Negro sections of this city. The majority of Negroes are living under such crowded conditions that three or four families in an apartment is the rule rather than the exception. Seventy-five percent of the Negro homes have been converted into homes for Whites. The poolrooms and gambling clubs are beginning to charge for the privilege of sleeping on the pool-room tables overnight.[79]

Xenophobic Whites did not want to cohabitate with Blacks.[80] The only alternative for Blacks was "the Negro district" of Black Bottom.[81]

During the Depression, both Blacks and Whites lost their jobs, but the unemployment rate in the Black community remained significantly higher than that of Whites. In 1930, only 8 percent of the city's employable Blacks

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[76] Forrester B. Washington, "Deluxe Summer Camp for Colored Children," The *Journal of Negro Life* (October 1921): 303.

[77] Donald R. Deskins, Jr., "Race, Residence, and Workplace in Detroit, 1880 to 1965," *Economic Geography, Contributions to an Understanding of Black America* 48, (1968): 197.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Ibid.

[80] This was relatively a new phenomenon, since, before the great migration, "Detroit residential areas were not strictly segregated. In this lengthy passage, Joyce Shaw Peterson explains this ironic process;

> Before World War I the influx of black workers into the auto industry and the city of Detroit was so slight that there were few hard-and-fast restrictions on their activities. Detroit residential areas were not segregated, nor did bars, theaters, and other public recreational facilities segregate their patrons. The increase of black workers at the time of World War I coincided with a developing housing shortage in Detroit and was sufficient to lead to the development of patterns of discrimination against blacks and fairly strictly segregated residential areas and social facilities. The housing shortage of World War I was exacerbated for black workers by growing racial segregation. See Joyce Shaw Peterson, "Black Automobile Workers in Detroit, 1910-1930, The Journal of Negro History, Vol. 64 (1979), 182.

[81] *Detroit Free Press*, June 3, 1917, p. 1.

were gainfully employed.[82] To supplement their income during the economic crisis of the Great Depression, an "informal economy" emerged as a way a survival. Crime and vice proliferated. In 1929, Black Bottom was inundated with criminal activities such as bootlegging, prostitution, whorehouses, and numbers gambling. The city estimated 20,000 speakeasies and whorehouses, many located in the Erskine-Rivard section of Black Bottom.[83] Also during this time, Paradise Valley became a world-renowned center of Black nightlife.

HOW DID THEY SPEND THEIR LEISURE TIME?
Paradise Valley
Paradise Is embodied in the myriad images of our wistful dreams and lofty desires; Paradise Lives in our hope for boundless happiness and freedom eternal.
-Heather Buchanan

The kind of freedom and happiness in Paradise Valley[84] that Heather Buchanan wrote of in her poem, "Paradise (In the Valley)" resonates with the precious memories that remain dear and close to many Detroiters today. But the story of Paradise Valley has stirred much debate among Detroit historians, and the former residents and patrons of Black Bottom. For instance, most historians of Detroit history rarely highlight the glamour and sophistication of Black life that Peggy Moore, Sunny Wilson, and Ernest Borden's memoirs recall. On the other hand, former Black Bottom resident and community leader, Gloster Current, viewed Paradise Valley as a "misnomer. The streets are not paved with gold. The citizens who walk them are not saints. Nor are they all sinners... Paradise Valley is at once a myth, a dream; still it lives and breathes and does things."[85]

B. J. Widick, in his seminal work, *Detroit: City of Race and Class Violence*, wrote of this Black section of Detroit as "a hellhole of filth, overcrowding, and misery,"[86] while historian Thomas Sugrue, thought the name "Paradise Valley" to be "a reflection of the hope of Black newcomers to the city, and an ironic comment on hopes still unmet."[87] The purpose of

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[82] T. Arnold Hill, "The Plight of the Negro Industrial Worker," The Journal of Negro education, Vol 5, No. 1 (Jan., 1936),41.

[83] Bak, *Turkey Stearnes And The Detroit Stars: The Negro League in Detroit, 1919-1933*, 130.

[84] An entertainment and business district that developed along Hastings Street after World War I. See Bak, *Turkey Stearnes And The Detroit Stars: The Negro League in Detroit, 1919-1933*, 128.

[85] Gloster Current, "Paradise Valley: A Famous and Colorful Part of Detroit as Seen through the Eyes of an Insider," Detroit Magazine, June, 1946, 32.

[86] B. J. Widick, *Detroit: City of Race and Class Violence*. (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1972): 90.

[87] Sugrue, *The Origins of Urban Crisis*, 36.

my analysis is not to corroborate, prove, or disprove any of the above opinions, but rather to analyze the ways in which the Black Bottom community responded to the depression, unemployment, racism, and discrimination, as well as the various ways in which they spent their leisure time, and where they entertained themselves.

Life as a factory worker gave Black Bottom residents the blues. The factories were sweaty, filthy, and dangerous. Hastings Street became an escape route for Black Bottom residents looking to ease the humdrum ghetto lifestyle. Since Hastings Street ran from the west end of Black Bottom, through Paradise Valley to the north, essentially, Black Bottom and Paradise Valley were not exclusive of one another because both inhabited the social, cultural and economic dimensions of Black life. That is, Black Bottom was the residential area, and Paradise Valley served as the commercial district. Hastings Street in Paradise Valley was the main thoroughfare of Black happenings, both commercial and entertainment and crime and vice.

Hastings Street had been referred to by that name since the 1890s, when it was mostly an Italian and Jewish immigrant community. Black folk started to move into the area in the early part of the century, and by the mid-1920s, most of the Jewish population had left, leaving the emerging Black community to take shape.[88] By the early thirties, according to Richard L. King,[89] Rollo Vest, a popular newspaper reporter and theatrical agent, organized a contest to give the area a name.[90]

The need to find a name for the area actually reflected the social climate of pervasive racism, discrimination, oppression, and depression that marked Black life. As a result the restrictive covenants and neighborhood agreements, Blacks could not live or socialize in other parts of Detroit.[91] Paradise Valley became the thriving entertainment and commercial district, while the residential sections of the lower east side were designated Black Bottom.[92] In the 1930s the pulse of Paradise Valley centered around Adams and St. Antoine. These streets were filled with action – Black-owned clubs,

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[88] Bak, Turkey Stearnes And The Detroit Stars: The Negro League in Detroit, 1919-1933, 128.

[89] Richard L. King was manager of the popular Club Three 666 from 1942-49.

[90] Latzman, Untold Tales, Unsung Heroes: An Oral History of Detroit's African American Community, 1918-1967, 164.

[91] Current, "Paradise Valley: A Famous and Colorful Part of Detroit as Seen through the Eyes of an Insider," 32, 34.

[92] Acording to Gloster Current's above article, the boundaries for Paradise Valley were

Gratiot on the South, Riopelle on the East, Medbury on the North and John R on the West. Since then the boundaries have been gradually extended. Newsmen covering the race riot of 1943 erroneously applied the term to include all of the non-white population strip east of Woodward, from the River to the Boulevard. See Gloster Current, "Paradise Valley: A Famous and Colorful Part of Detroit as Seen through the Eyes of an Insider," Detroit Magazine, June, 1946, 32.

after-hours spots, and restaurants.[93] By 1933, there were approximately 68 Black-owned businesses in Black Bottom.[94]

In Paradise Valley's heyday, [95] Hastings Street was known for its various indulgences. Whether in the shops, or on the sidewalks where blues and jazz spilled out from the dozens of clubs that faced each other, one could find pleasure in any form. There were seventeen nightclubs and private clubs, restaurants and stores on Hastings - all Black owned. During the day Paradise Valley was 75% Black - proprietors, customers, hangers-on, day-time gamblers and the numbers pick-up men. But by night it was a totally integrated retreat of entertainment in a checkered city where Blacks and Whites did not cross the dividing lines between their residential areas.[96]

Nonetheless, Paradise Valley and its nightclubs were "true cultural melting pots...Blacks and Whites drank, danced, and were entertained side by side, without tension or incident. Paradise Valley's unofficial mayor, Chester A. Rentie, aided Detroit's Mayor in "preventing trouble" in the Valley, making the atmosphere cordial and happy.[97] Blacks and Tans boasted White customers with high class entertainment that gave many Black entertainers, famous today, their start in show business. Entertainers like Earl Hines, the Inkspots, Ethel Waters, Pearl Bailey, Billie Holiday, Dinah Washington, Ella Fitzgerald, Bill "Bojangles" Robinson and many more started their careers in Paradise Valley.[98]

Betty Taylor, a former chorus line dancer, who worked at Club Zombie, came to Paradise Valley in 1940 and began her career as a dancer. After telling her mother that she would visit the Valley for two weeks and return home to Chicago, she "stayed for twenty years."[99] After leaving Club Zombie, Taylor went to at the Club 666 (under the new management of Richard King), formed the Taylorettes, and started producing shows there.[100]

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[93] Wilson and Cohassey, *Toast of The Town: The Life and Times of Sunnie Wilson*, 43.

[94] The Detroit Tribune, Saturday, May 6, 1933.

[95] According to former resident and patron, Peggy A. Moore, notes the timeframe of Paradise Valley's "heyday":

In its heyday, back in the 1940s, 50s, and 60s, Paradise Valley, a Black Mecca that was located on the lower east side of Detroit, dazzled and attracted more weekend visitors to her doorstep than did Greek Town or China Town during the same period. See Peggy A. Moore, *Paradise Valley Days: A Photo Album Poetry Book*, (Detroit: Detroit Black Writer's Guild, Inc., 1998): vi.

[96] Latzman, Untold Tales, *Unsung Heroes: An Oral History of Detroit's African American Community, 1918-1967*, 18.

[97] "Brown Mayors; Unofficial Negro Mayors Elected in regular Polls and Other Functions as Chief Consultants on Racial Matters in White Cities," December, 1949, 44.

[98] Ibid, 19.

[99] *Detroit Free Press*, November 17, 1985.

[100] Ibid. In 1985, Taylor participated in a reproduction of the Paradise Valley days, at the D. A. V. Hall at East Jefferson, and even turned the cabaret hall into a replica of Paradise Valley's old Club 666.

Also, it was within the confines of Paradise Valley that ball players found a place to relax and enjoy themselves, since White hotels and restaurants refused to serve them. Visiting teams usually stayed at Black Bottom's grand and exquisite hotels like the Biltmore on St. Antoine, the Tanzy, the luxurious New Oceola Hotel located at Catherine and Hastings, or the Hotel Williams at 550 E. Adams. Once settled into their rooms, and luggage tucked away, the Negro leaguers would head to Paradise Valley for an evening of fun, food, and entertainment.[101]

Crime and Vice in Paradise Valley

The gambling joints, illicit sporting houses, brothels, blind pigs, and social clubs (all of which offered illegal prostitution, alcoholic beverages, and gambling services) in Paradise Valley numbered more than 20,000 by 1925.[102] During the Depression, the core of Paradise Valley's economy was the infamous and illegal numbers racket[103]. It was believed that the only way that a Black man could make a lot of money was to run a numbers house. Religious and community leaders felt that the numbers racket was an honest and legitimate activity partly because, during the Depression, the numbers racket helped many of Black Bottoms important institutions to economically sustain themselves. For instance, when Reverend Peck needed quick cash to complete the construction of an addition to his church, "Mr. ------ did not wait for me to ask help of him but came to me and offered the full amount needed to complete the job."[104] Another religious leader explained that the numbers racket was not "an evil because the money is spent right in our own community and the bankers are our best charity givers."[105] Against numbers running at first, Detroit Urban League director John Dancy knew that he could eventually count on the numbers runners in time of financial distress.[106]

Eventually the numbers racket became the most popular (illegal) activity in the Valley. This did not stop the proliferation of other types of illegal gambling joints in Paradise Valley. One could go to the Turf Bar, at

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[101] Bak, 128; Nightlife would eventually move out of Paradise Valley in the late 1940's up to locations centered around John R and Canfield where white businessmen had the financial power to control entertainment. Although there were some black businessmen, like Sunnie Wilson, who owned businesses in the John R and Canfield area, whites had more money to afford top entertainers such as Sarah Vaughn, Harry Belafonte, Billie Holiday, and George Shearing. This would be the nail in the coffin on the black economic monopoly of Paradise Valley. See Latzman, *Untold Tales, Unsung Heroes: An Oral History of Detroit's African American Community, 1918-1967*, 179.

[102] Cohassey, 11.

[103] The numbers ranged from one to 78. Twelve winning numbers were drawn daily and paid odds of 500-1 or $25 for a nickel.

[104] Victoria Wolcott *Remaking Respectability: African American Women in Interwar Detroit*. (Chapel Hill and London; The University of North Carolina Press, 2001): 195.

[105] Ibid.

[106] Ibid., 200.

1947 St. Antoine, and play Black jack and poker all night long and into the early morning hours.

By 1935 the numbers gambling racket continued to cater to the Black poor. Numbers running was considered to be as respectable as working at Ford auto plant. "There was no sense of wrongdoing in gambling or playing the numbers," explained Elaine Moon, "Blacks saw it as an opportunity, a way out of the ghetto. The proprietors of gambling establishments and numbers operators were the most highly respected members of the community."[107] Even the great numbers scandal of 1939 - convicting Detroit Mayor Richard Reading and members of his administration, along with Richard Reading Jr., John White (Joe Louis's manager), a former sheriff, a police superintendent, and 20 police officers - did little to quell the popularity of numbers racket.[108]

During the Depression, prostitution thrived in Black Bottom and Paradise Valley. This illegal practice was not looked down upon because it actually provided jobs for Black women, whose families depended on this type of employment. In *African American Women in Interwar Detroit*, Victoria Wolcott explained how some Black women rejected notions of "bourgeois respectability" by turning prostitution into a necessary evil that "provided employment opportunities for African American women."[109] In other words, the informal economy – the numbers racket and prostitution – helped sustain the Black Bottom community during the Depression Era.

EXECUTIVE ORDER 8802

"Negroes will be considered only as janitors." - the General Manager of North Aviation[110]

In 1941, as the United States prepared for imminent war in the Pacific Theatre, Black newspapers circulated stories of blatant discrimination in the defense industry that had a direct impact on the Black Bottom community. Many war plants refused to hire Blacks. Those plants that did so would only hire them as janitors. "It is the company policy not to employ them as mechanics and aircraft workers," explained the general manager of North American Aviation.[111] Standard Steel officials told the Urban League: "We have not had a Negro working in 25 years and do not plan to start now."[112] It did not matter to the heads-of-industry that most of the Black applicants were

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[107] Elaine Moon, from "(The Past Prologue): Paradise Valley." Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Michigan.
[108] Moore, *Paradise Valley Days*, 19.
[109] Wolcott *Remaking Respectability: African American Women in Interwar Detroit*, 100.
[110] Doris Kearns Goodwin, *No Ordinary Time* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994): 247.
[111] Wolcott, *Remaking Respectability: African American Women in Interwar Detroit*, 246.
[112] Goodwin, *No Ordinary Time*, 247.

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experienced machinists who were trained as mechanics, tool and die makers, and sheet metal workers, but that "It [was] not the policy of [the] company to employ other than of the Caucasian race." Water White, Urban League leader, wrestled with the absurdity of the matter:

What happens when a Negro who has had excellent training at one of NYC's technical or trade schools applies for one of the thousands of new jobs opening up? He finds the jobs segregated even in New York City. 'Wanted--White Mechanics, tool and die makers, sheet metal workers.' Or perhaps, the colored applicant is told that he can get a job only if he is a member of the AFL aeronautical workers union, charted by the International Association of Machinists, whose constitution bans all but White persons from membership.[113]

Disenchantment and frustration quickly moved civil rights leaders to challenge the rampant discrimination that permeated the defense industry. While traveling through the Deep South visiting the Sleeping Car Brotherhood Divisions with colleague Milton Webster, A. Phillip Randolph proposed a march on Washington. President Roosevelt realized that the civil rights leaders were adamant about the protest movement. President Roosevelt, knowing that "his wife enjoyed much deeper trust and support within the Black community than he did," turned to her for help.[114] Eleanor Roosevelt feared that the Black movement - in a city manned by a southern-bred police force - could possibly end in violence and bloodshed. She agreed. to write a letter to Randolph urging him to halt the protest. Randolph refused, and President Roosevelt agreed to meet with Randolph and White on June 18.

After seven days of Eleanor refereeing the Order issue, the President signed Executive Order 8802. The President's policy assured "non-discrimination in defense employment with an executive order setting up machinery to insure that Negroes will be given equitable treatment in seeking work."[115] The *Chicago Tribune* reported that the order followed a memorandum the President sent to the [Office of Production Management] last week declaring many complaints had reached him that Negroes especially were being barred from armament work and ordering that agency to see to it that full utilization of the nation's man power was made.[116]

Morale within the Black Bottom community received a boost when their complaints and grievances had ended in victory. According to Goodwin,

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[113] Ibid.
[114] Ibid, 249.
[115] *Atlanta Constitution*, June26, 1941, p. 17.
[116] *Chicago Tribune*, June 26, 1941, p. 23.

"when the President signed the executive order, faith in democracy which Negroes had begun to feel had strayed from its course was renewed throughout the nation."[117]

SOJOURNER TRUTH HOUSING PROJECTS: ELEANOR, FRANKLIN, AND BLACK BOTTOM

The Detroit Housing Commission will in no way change the racial characteristics of any neighborhood in Detroit through occupancy standards of housing projects under its jurisdiction.

-Detroit Housing Committee, 1942

By 1942, the tension of racism and discrimination was at a boiling point. At this point, Blacks still led in unemployment, and of the 160,000 Blacks in Detroit, 8 percent where on public welfare,[118] compared with 0.08% of White Detroit residents on welfare.[119] To make matters worse, the housing crisis continued to confine Blacks to the cramped and congested area of Black Bottom. The controversy over African Americans' access to a public housing project stirred the public debate. Whites violently protested the inclusion of African American war workers in the Sojourner Truth Housing Project and eventually convinced the Federal Housing Administration to restrict the housing project to White families.[120] As soon as Eleanor Roosevelt resigned from the Office of Civilian Defense, she became entangled in further controversy, a brutal battle between Blacks and Whites over the occupancy of a newly built federal housing project in Detroit.[121] The two-hundred-unit development had been developed for Black *defense workers by Eleanor Roosevelt's friend at the Federal Works Agency,* Clark Foreman, a liberal Southerner who felt that Blacks were entitled to enjoy the benefits of the public-housing boom necessitated by the war.[122]

When White workers heard about the Sojourner Truth project, they demanded the units for themselves and rallied the support of hostile White residents in the neighborhood where the development was being built.[123] On February 27, 1942, the *Detroit Free Press* reported that the efforts of the new Black families to move into the homes were halted by an angry picketing mob of "300 White men and women."[124] Rudolph Tenerowicz, Detroit's

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[117] Goodwin, *No Ordinary Time*, 253.
[118] *Detroit News*, October 5, 1942, p. 1, 4.
[119] Ibid.
[120] Wolcott, *Remaking Respectability: African American Women in Interwar Detroit*, 243.
[121] Goodwin, *No Ordinary Time*, 326.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid.
[124] *Detroit Free Press*, February 27, 1942, p. 1.

congressman, carried the ball in Washington, and successfully persuaded the members of the Conference Committee, consisting mostly of Southerners, to add a clause to the FWA's $300,000 appropriations bill specifying that "no money would be released unless the 'nigger lover' [Clark Foreman] was fired and the project converted to White occupancy." That same day, the Detroit housing committee was ordered to redirect its recruitment of prospective tenants from Black to White. Minutes later, Clark Foreman resigned.[125]

Civil-rights leaders reacted with rage. Their first impulse was to contact Eleanor Roosevelt. "Surely you would not stand by and see the Sojourner Truth defense homes that were built for Negroes be taken away from us," Mrs. Charles Diggs wrote from Detroit.[126] Calmly and directly, Eleanor Roosevelt approached the president, emphasizing that both Blacks and Whites, including Edward Jeffries, Detroit's mayor, and leaders of the UAW, were firmly committed to the position that the Blacks should have the project. Eleanor's intervention prevailed.[127]

On Wednesday, April 29, 1942, seven months after the federal government had contracted the construction of the projects "for Black war workers and their families,"[128] Black families moved into the Sojourner Truth projects, under police protection. The *Detroit Free Press* reported "14 Negro families were moved into the Sojourner Truth Defense Housing Project at Fenelon and Nevada...under the protection of State troops and battalions of city and State police."[129]

THE RIOTS OF '43

The riots of 1943 had been predicted by many who saw the dangerous mixture of race, housing, and unemployment as a harbinger of what was to come. "The Negro factor in Detroit is a keg of powder with a short fuse and any one of many possible incidents, fairly insignificant in themselves, may be the match put to the fuse," warned Detroit News reporter, A. M. Smith.[130] Detroit leaders, city officials, and industrialists scurried for answers to and analysis of "the Negro Problem." Some blamed idleness due to lack of employment in young Black youth. Charles C. Diggs said we shall never make the proper approach to the Negro problem here or anywhere else in the North until we take fully into account the basically different social and economic systems of the North and the South; make proper allowances in

[125] Goodwin, *No Ordinary Time*, 327.
[126] Ibid.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Thomas, *Life For Us Is What We Make It: Building Black Community in Detroit, 1915-1945*, 143.
[129] *Detroit Free Press*, April 30, 1942, p. 1.
[130] *The Detroit News*, October 5, 1942, p. 1.

recognition of this difference, and set up proper aids to the Negro in making the change.[131]

John C. Dancy placed the blame on local unions, and industry management. Forexample, "the AFL Machinist Union will not admit Negroes to membership." On the other hand, Dancy criticized the management for their passive role in discrimination against Black workers:

> But I still feel that the greater responsibility in this is on the management of industrial plants. If they would take a firm position with reference to hiring Negroes, and let it be known throughout their plants that no prejudice on the part of White workers would be tolerated, the situation would quickly calm down.[132]

For William J. Norton, executive vice president of the Children's Fund of Michigan and chairman of Mayor Jeffries's Inter-racial Committee, the problem was segregation and lack of jobs. And since there was little done in efforts to deal with the crisis of racism and joblessness, most Blacks were quite intense about the prevalence of an imminent riot.[133]

On June 10, almost a week and a half before the riots occurred, Henry N. Johnson, president of the Detroit Real Estate Board, speaking to the issue of inadequate housing and the slum conditions in which Black Bottom residents lived, told mortgage bankers that Black Bottom residents should be given "the same opportunity to establish homes as the city's White population, with equal police protection, adequate schools, recreation facilities, garbage collection and other services."[134]

In John A. Williams's 1968 article, "The Long Hot Summers of Yesteryear," he notes that urban race riots in America are not unique, and that White violence against Blacks "seems to have occurred most often as a response to prevailing patterns of White social, economic, and political supremacy."[135]

According to Dominic J. Capeci, Jr. and Martha Wilkerson's *Layered Violence: The Detroit Rioters of 1943*, the riot resulted from Black rage, paranoia, innate criminality, and idleness. By Capeci and Wilkerson's account, young Black, "antisocial" and "aggressive" male roustabouts, who had nothing else better to do with their time and energy, accused White sailors of throwing "a colored lady and her baby" over the rails of the Belle

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[131] Ibid.
[132] *The Detroit News*, October 6, 1942, p. 11
[133] *The Detroit News*, October 8, 1942, p. 1
[134] *The Detroit News*, June 11, 1943, p. 21
[135] John A. Williams, "The Long Hot Summers of Yesteryear," *The History Teacher 1*, no. 3 (1968): 10.

Isle bridge.[136] This act precipitated the riot. Capeci and Wilkerson wrote that Charles "Little Willie" L., a "5 feet 4 inches...140 pound...dark skinned...criminal," 20 years old with "limited education and marked racial feelings," along with Leo T. incited and instigated a day-long riot that ended the next day when 4,000 army troops were sent into the city. Thirty-five people lay dead, 530 injured and 1300 arrested.[137] Twenty Blacks were given 90-day jail terms for disturbing the peace. No Whites were convicted of any wrong-doing.[138]

Perhaps the real reason for the riot lay in the timeless issue of inadequate housing and the horrible effects that substandard, crowded conditions had on Black Bottom residents. Because of the crowded and poorly ventilated housing in Black Bottom, communicable diseases, especially pneumonia and tuberculosis, proliferated, and Black workers suffered disproportionately compared to Whites. In 1920, pneumonia killed Blacks three times more often than it did Whites in Detroit. By the early 1930s Detroit health statistics reported that Blacks were more likely than Whites to contract tuberculosis. Health Department investigators concluded that about two-thirds of the pneumonia fatalities and one half of those from tuberculosis could have been avoided if crowded and unsanitary housing had been eliminated. Segregated housing patterns that boxed Black workers into limited areas of the city not only were blows to comfort, pride and family life; they could also kill.[139]

The Ossian Sweet case and Sojourner housing projects are examples of how Blacks who attempted to expand into new areas were often met with White mob violence.

Almost a month after the riots, Black Bottom still bore their effects. Many merchants continued to try to put their businesses (and lives) back together, boarding up broken windows and replacing the vast amounts of merchandise that had been looted during the riots.[140] Exacerbating Black problems, Mayor Jeffries's 1946 Detroit Plan targeted Black Bottom as the ideal site for so-called slum clearance. When the Detroit Plan was issued in its final form in 1951, 140,000 Blacks lived in Black Bottom. As expected, many middle-class Blacks rushed to move to the more affluent neighborhoods of La Salle Boulevard, Chicago Boulevard, Boston Edison, and Arden Park. Displacement from Black Bottom led many economically

[136] Capeci and Wilkerson, Layered Violence: The Detroit Rioters of 1943, 4.
[137] Ibid.
[138] The Detroit News, June 22, 1943, p. 2.
[139] Joyce Shaw Peterson, "Black Automobile Workers in Detroit, 1910-1930, The Journal of Negro History. Vol. 64 (1979): 183.
[140] The Detroit Tribune, Saturday, July 10, 1943. p. 1.

disadvantaged Blacks to take up residence around Twelfth Street, the former Jewish "second front" on the city's northwest side--a section that never engendered the favorable climate of community known to former Black Bottom residents.[141] Regardless, Black Bottom and Paradise Valley had begun to descend.

URBAN RENEWAL

"Negroes had it made in Detroit until World War II. We had everything we needed in the Black community. Discrimination gave us tremendous [economic] power because we had been compacted in one small area."
-Sidney Barthwell

"This was no slum, this was an area which people lived in. Today, you would call it middle class.
-Charlie Primas

The death knell, it seems, was struck by urban renewal which transformed Black Bottom into Lafayette Park. As early as 1941 "the first concrete plan aiming at ultimate rehabilitation of the area within the Grand Boulevard circle was under consideration by Jeffries's blight committee...The plan, embracing 20 square blocks bounded by Hastings, Dequindre and Larned streets and Monroe avenue"[142] had sealed the fate of Black Bottom and Paradise Valley. The 1943 riots only provided a reason and logic for what followed. The Chrysler Freeway took Hastings, Stroh's took over St. Antoine, and Hudson's took Brush and Beaubien. It resembled the Berlin Conference. Some say it was a White man's conspiracy to break the power and solidity of the Black man's community. Some residents jokingly called urban renewal "Negro removal." And when one considers these claims from an historical perspective, it is plausible. Many believe that all of the above factored into the inevitable end of Black Bottom.

Noted sociologist and historian, Thomas Sugrue, analyzes the postwar dilemma as something that simply added to problematic issues already confronting the citizens of Black Bottom and Paradise Valley. In his monumental study, *The Origins of The Urban Crisis*, Sugrue grapples with

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[141] Wilson and Cohassey, *Toast of The Town: The Life and Times of Sunnie Wilson.*, 147.
[142] *The Detroit News*, Jan. 24, 1941. p. 1-2

the complexities of the matter, and what the intentions of the Detroit Plan had been:

Compounding the housing woes of inner-city Blacks was the city's extensive urban renewal program. The centerpiece of Detroit's postwar master plan was the clearance of 'blighted areas' in the inner city for the construction of middle-class housing that it was believed would revitalize the urban economy. Like most postwar cities, Detroit had high hopes for slum removal. City officials expected that the eradication of 'blight'would increase city tax revenue, revitalize the decaying urban core, and improve the living conditions of the poorest slum dwellers. Overcrowded, unsanitary, and dilapidated districts like Paradise Valley and the Lower East Side would be replaced by clean, modern, high-rise housing projects, civic institutions, and hospitals. Four of the city's most important redevelopment projects--the Gratiot Redevelopment Site, the Brewster and Douglass public housing projects, and the Medical Center Area-- were promised on the destruction of some of the most densely populated Black neighborhoods in the city.[143]

In reality, Mayor Edward Jeffries and the Detroit City Plan Commission in 1946 had destroyed a community. Black Bottom and Paradise Valley were devastated by highway construction. The Oakland-Hastings (later Chrysler) Freeway barreled through these former Black enclaves. The Hastings Street commercial district in Paradise Valley felled many of Detroit's most prominent Black institutions, from jazz clubs to the St. Antoine branch of the YMCA. The John C. Lodge Freeway ripped through the increasingly Black area around Twelfth Street, and Highland Park. The aftermath was not much more than a "'no man's land' of deterioration and abandonment."[144] Actual construction had been delayed and for 10 years after Jeffries Detroit Plan, Black Bottom lay dormant and the city did nothing to help business owners or Black residents to relocate.[145] Shopkeepers had no real reason to invest in improvements, as condemned buildings were buried under asphalt and cement. While statistics report that, by 1950, 423 residences, 109 businesses, 22 manufacturing plants, and 93 vacant lots had been condemned for the first three-mile stretch of the Lodge Freeway from Jefferson to Pallister, the Michigan Chronicle's 1951 front page story,

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[143] Sugrue, Origin of Urban Crisis, 48-49.
[144] Ibid.
[145] Ibid., 47.

"Progress Has Been Rapid for Negroes in Motor City,"[146] seemed propagandist, at best. By 1958, the Lodge Freeway had displaced 2,222 buildings. Destruction continued to make way for the Edsel Ford Expressway with the demolition of approximately more 2,800 buildings. While some of the displaced residents were White homeowners, Black renters suffered the brunt of such, since, unlike the majority of the White homeowners whom were successfully relocated, they were left out in the cold.[147]

Eventually, homes and businesses were replaced with apartments and townhouses such as those in Lafayette Park, which many of the former residents couldn't afford. The rise of new office buildings, the development of a large network of expressways whimsically cut through what was once a testament of Black socio-economic success. B. J. Widick thought this fleecing of the Black community to be "an aura of prosperity,"[148] while those folk whom were suffering the sting of displacement and obstruction saw it differently: "I [did] not have money to rent a $75.00 house [with] no heat, " exclaimed Maud W. Cain, a widow forced to move out of her one-room apartment on in Black Bottom. Harvey Royal shared Cain's pain and frustration at the senselessness of moving residents from their homes, for the purpose of highway construction: "I think it would have been so much nicer to have built places for people to live in than a highway and just put people in the street."[149] Paradise Valley was obliterated, but the Black ghetto simply moved to the Twelfth Street area, forgotten until it became the center of the 1967 riot. Twelfth Street had been the Jewish area; the Jews were now living in Huntington Woods, Southfield, and other suburbs.[150] Middle-class Blacks moved to the more prominent neighborhoods of La Salle Boulevard, Chicago Boulevard, Boston-Edison, and Arden Park.[151] Black Bottom and Paradise Valley were gone.

CONCLUSION

Still, there are many topics on Black Bottom that deserve critical attention, yet, this regulated study does not have the space necessary to probe such an interesting question as the intra-racial dynamics in Black Bottom. For instance, Sunnie Wilson's autobiography urges us to consider the various ways in which skin color might have influenced the employment practices of

[146] *The Michigan Chronicle*, July 14, 1952, p. 1.
[147] Sugrue, *The Origin of Urban Crisis*, p. 48.
[148] Widick, *Detroit: City of Race and Class Violence*, 140.
[149] Ibid., 48.
[150] Ibid., 140.
[151] Ibid., 147.

the Detroit Urban League. Also, Richard Bak, Ernest Borden, Peggy A. Moore and John F. Cohassey have provided probing works that further analyze the complexities and intricacies of life in Black Bottom, but there is more to be done. Above all, this study is not an exhaustive treatment. It seeks only to explore and interrogate those questions listed above, for the purpose of creating and sustaining a critical dialogue on the history of Blacks in Black Bottom.

EPILOGUE

Former Black Bottom resident M. Kelly Fritz, during an interview with Historian Elaine Moon Latzman provided an interesting perspective on Black Bottom's fate. "I think World War II was the greatest setback to Negro relations in general. I think that one of the mistakes that Black people made was when they thought they had integration, they gave up their own institutions. I think every ethnic group needs a place where they can get together to discuss things that are peculiar to their problems."[152]

Perhaps Black Bottom had served its purpose. Black Bottom evolved out of segregation and housing discrimination. Legal "Deed Restrictions" prevented Black folk from living amidst reluctant Whites, and automatically transferred Blacks to the area previously occupied by Greek, Italian, and Polish immigrants. As a matter of course, these groups eventually moved to establish communities away from Black Bottom, leaving Blacks to shape and mold their meager existence into a vibrant and self-sustaining community. With the help of the DUL, Black southerners migrated to Black Bottom and made a life for themselves and their family. The DUL forged alliances with other White and Black institutions to help transform Black Bottom into a decent community.

By the late 1950s, desegregation offered Blacks the opportunity to spend their money at White businesses. Hastings Street, once a thriving and often crowded thoroughfare of Black-owned business, clubs, etc., was nothing more than rubble, dismay, and memories. The poor Black folk living in Black Bottom - Riis' "other half" - could not afford to protest against urban renewal. And the ones who *did* have the wealth, clout, and might to wage war against the machines of such urban disruption, packed their bags and headed to even loftier retreats, neighborhoods, and getaways. For instance, Sunnie Wilson headed to Idlewild, and in September of 1962, the

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[152] Latzman, Untold Tales, *Unsung Heroes: An Oral History of Detroit's African American Community, 1918-1967,* 164.

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rich, famous, and well-to-do Black elites gathered at the Gotham Hotel for a farewell party for John White.

The destruction of the Gotham surely symbolized the end of an era. As the Gotham fell, so did many other landmarks in Black Bottom and Paradise Valley, city officials continued to turn former Black homes and businesses into vacant lots. Black folk were devastated…some were left homeless. The rest were sent scurrying in the direction of Twelfth Street. Some would say that stringent racism and segregation made Black Bottom and Paradise Valley, and integration destroyed it. Sunnie Wilson believes that, just like other cities around the country that sought to rid themselves of   run-down Black neighborhoods, the take over of Paradise Valley could not be stopped. That's been the White man's philosophy - to move in, move the people out, and let the property sit vacant.[153]

Whether or not this is true, the tight-knit community - Black Bottom - that once boasted the grand example of human will, courage, endurance, and strength - under constant pressure - is gone. The most efficient Black prominent social and cultural Mecca that Black folk could ever claim with a real sense of pride and joy - Paradise Valley - is gone. The only thing that remains are memories, photos, stories, and one particular poem, "The Garden", written by Detroit poet Cheryl Wells, that captures the essence of a bygone era in Black history:

Turn the earth
From the top
Of Black Bottom
and bring back
memories of a place
Within a place

Use ebony hands
to sift through
grains of shifting
ebony magical shapes
these challenged those
unlawful forces unafraid
to grow Paradise from urban
blight
and echo unrestrained freedom.

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[153] Ibid., 163.

Emerge Paradise Valley
from old-African-identities
Spring forth
Up past
restrictive injustice
to backhand racism
In the face
using cultural imagination
and comely grace

Dark-merging-bottom-
types
combine to shove, push
aside urban poverty
and revealed unlimited
possibilities
from sweat engendering
Character
A human community
whose sense of
responsibility
baptized dark bottom
earth

Re-emerge repositors
of enduring values,
their wisdom inspired,
nurturing the dark
imaged roots
which reach deep down
into Black Bottom earth
Turning it over from the
top....[154]

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[154] Moore, *Paradise Valley Days*, 22.

The Opposite of *Liberté*, *Egalité*, and *Fraternité*: The Relations Between Vichy France and the Jews

LINDSAY M. CHICK

The Holocaust was a systematic and state-sponsored genocide of Jews that was put into action by the National Socialist Party in Germany at the Wannsee Conference of 1942. However, while one may find it easy to place sole blame upon Germany and the Nazis, one must also consider the roles of other countries in the segregation, imprisonment, deportation, and eventual murder of Jews, both citizens and immigrants, during these years. One such country was France. The French Vichy Government not only collaborated with the Nazis, but at times, they seemed almost enthusiastic at the idea of 'cleansing' their country of its Jewish populations. Using various resources, including textual sources, such as well-researched historical works, and film, including both documentary and fiction, this paper will explore the vast extent of Vichy involvement in the Holocaust, which would eventually lead to the deaths of many Jews who called France their home.

Throughout the history of Europe, Jews were often seen as "the other" and denied many rights given to other citizens within their respective countries. However, on 27 September 1791, two years after the beginning of the French Revolution, the Emancipation Act was proclaimed, granting civil rights to Jews and becoming the first country to do so.[1] In December 1789, Maximilien Robespierre stated that "whatever one thinks, it can never be politic to condemn to debasement and oppression a multitude of men who live in the middle of us".[2] In essence, while the Revolution demanded *Liberté*, *Egalité*, and *Fraternité* for all, Vichy France would demand the opposite in relation to Jews.

Thanks to the Emancipation Act, Jews from all over Europe (primarily Central and Eastern) found France quite appealing due to growths of anti-Semitism in their own countries.[3] Therefore, France's "liberal immigration policy" resulted in "a rapid rise in the number of Jews."[4] In fact, these migrations continued right up until World War II with the flight of German

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[1] Jacques Adler, *The Jews of Paris and the Final Solution: Communal Response and Internal Conflicts, 1940-1941* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 4.
[2] Paul Webster, *Pétain's Crime: The Full Story of French Collaboration in the Holocaust* (London: Pan Books, 2001), introduction.
[3] Adler, 4.
[4] For instance, in 1871, many Jews from the Alsace-Lorraine region moved into Paris after the Germans gained control of it (Adler, 4). They knew that if they remained, they would be in German hands, and therefore denied some

Jews to France after the rise of the Nazi party in 1933.[5] Although various historians have disputed this estimate, foreign Jews accounted for fifty to seventy-five percent of the total Jewish population of about 300,000.[6] Despite inexact numbers, the fact remains that France's offer of freedom and rights to Jews essentially turned the country into a safe haven for all Jews, both state and foreign.

Regardless of the opportunities that France seemed to offer to its Jews, the years leading up to World War II were not completely free of anti-Semitism. In 1871, a powerful anti-Semitic campaign began with the arrival of Jews from the Alsace-Lorraine region.[7] In 1881, "laws forbidding religious insults were lifted," adding to the racism felt in 1871.[8] Next, the 1898 Dreyfus Affair, in which a Jewish staff officer, Alfred Dreyfus, was falsely accused of spying for the Germans, also heightened French anti-Semitism.[9] In fact, even the brave actions by many Jews fighting for France during World War I could not completely stop the anti-Semitism that was already rooted in society, nor halt the racist laws that Vichy would soon create.

The Vichy government was created the second week of June 1940 with the promotion of Philippe Pétain to Prime Minister.[10] Since May of that year, Pétain had acted as deputy Prime Minister after his recall from Spain where he acted as Ambassador.[11] Paul Reynaud, the Prime Minister at that time, had called Pétain back from Spain in order to raise French morale and to "send a clear message to Germany that France was ready to stand and fight", because not only was he a war hero, but his grandfatherly appearance would reassure the French population.[12] However, Pétain did little more upon his return than sulk and talk about giving up.[13] Then, one month after Pétain's arrival, the Government left Paris for Bordeaux, Reynaud was forced to resign, and Pétain became Prime Minister.[14] Immediately, Pétain was eager to find 'peace' with an armistice, and within six months, the collaboration of the French Government with Germany was sealed.[15] It was around this same time

[5] Robert Gildea, *Marianne in Chains: Everyday Life in the French Heartland Under the German Occupation* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2002), 211.
[6] Robert Paxton states in *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order, 1940-1944*, that around half of these Jews were foreign, and "about half of those who were French citizens had one or more foreign parents" (169). Jacques Alder says "only 25 percent of the Jewish population was effectively of French ancestry. The overwhelming majority of the Jews in Paris were recent arrivals, or, at least, no more than first-generation French "(9).
[7] Webster says cartoons were created that portrayed these Jews as "hook-nosed, repulsively ugly, [and] rapacious" who "could not make them understood through thick German accents" (24).
[8] Ibid., 25.
[9] Ibid., 26.
[10] Ibid., 51.
[11] Ibid., 49.
[12] Ibid., 49-50.

when the first Jewish laws were created by the Vichy government, under Pétain, who was anti-Semitic.[16] One of the first racist 'acts' included the creation of the Commission for the Revisions of Naturalizations that would review "all new grants of French citizenship since 10 August 1927."[17] This Commission essentially revoked the citizenship of 15,154 new Frenchmen, of which 6,307 were considered Jews.[18]

In sum, there were "no fewer than 143 laws and *actes réglementaires* generated by the Vichy government" against the Jews.[19] However, there were a few primary laws that, with their addendums, were extremely racist and essentially denied Jews of the rights originally granted to them by the Emancipation Act. They included the *Statut des Juifs* of 3 October 1940, the Vichy Statute of 4 October 1940, the *Statut des Juifs* of 2 June 1941, and the laws of summer and fall 1942. It must also be recognized that all of these laws were decided by the Vichy government, and were by no means a product of German demand.[20] In fact, German authorities were impressed by the speed of their creation.[21]

The first primary law, the *Statut des Juifs* of 3 October 1940, essentially defined a Jew. Except for a few possible exceptions (those holding a combat veteran's card, "being a member of the Legion of Honor for military reasons", etc.), the law was aimed at all Jews in France.[22] In his book, *Vichy Law and the Holocaust*, Richard H. Weisburg cites the following articles of this statute:[23]

> Article I. For the purposes of the present law, a Jew is one who has three grandparents of the Jewish race; or who has two grandparents of that race, if his or her spouse is Jewish.

> Article II. The availability and exercise of the following public functions and duties are denied to Jews:
> 1. Head of State, member of the government, the Conseil d'État, [...], the courts of appeal, courts of first jurisdiction, justices of the peace, etc.

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[16] Ibid., 50.
[17] Robert O. Paxton, *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order, 1940-1944* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972),170-171.
[18] Ibid., 171.
[19] Richard H. Weisberg, *Vichy Law and the Holocaust in France* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), xv.
[20] Pierre Birnbaum, *The Jews of the Republic: A Political History of State Jews in France from Gambetta to Vichy*, trans. Jane Marie Todd (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1996), 338.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Birnbaum, 339.
[23] Weisberg, 39.

He then notes a similar German ordinance for Jews within the Occupied Zone:[24]

> A Jew is one who belongs to or used to belong to the Jewish religion or who has more than two Jewish grandparents. Any grandparent who belongs or has belonged to the Jewish religion counts as being Jewish.

In comparing the two, it is noticeable that only the French statute uses the word "race." It seems, therefore, as if the French were ahead of the Germans in developing 'racial' laws.[25] Furthermore Weisburg says that this law "sets the trend in French religious legislation throughout the war years of being more comprehensive than the equivalent German ordinance".[26] Also, the French brought up the idea of mixed marriage, which is elaborated upon further in the *Statut des Juifs* of 2 June 1941.

The next major law came only one day after the above Statute. It was titled the Vichy Statute of 4 October 1940 and established special camps that would hold "foreign nationals of the Jewish race."[27] These were essentially concentration camps, similar to those in the East, in that the conditions prisoners faced within were quite horrible all around. Also, in the creation of such a Statute, Vichy France was, once again, at the forefront of innovations relating to how to handle the "Jewish problem." The Germans were quite impressed, and it would not be absurd to ponder whether or not their own camp establishments were based upon the French model.[28]

The next law to follow in a long line of anti-Semitic legislation was the *Statut des Juifs* of 2 June 1941. This law helped to "eliminate Jewish property ownership, to restrict or even eliminate Jewish participation in many professions and trades," and to extend the *Statut des Juifs* of 3 October 1940 by elaborating further on the definition of a Jew.[29] Now, one's race could be determined by looking at the "religious practices of his or her grandparents."[30] The original law stated that if an individual practiced Judaism, they were a member of the Jewish race.[31] Likewise, if an individual of a "mixed-heritage" background (an individual with two non-Jewish grandparents and two Jewish grandparents) married a full Jew, they were

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[24] Ibid., 40
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid., 56.
[28] Ibid., 57.
[29] Ibid., 58.
[30] Ibid., 59.
[31] Ibid.

then deemed Jewish.[32] However, with *Statut des Juifs* of 2 June 1941, many more individuals could be labeled as Jews. For instance, if two "mixed-heritage" individuals decided to marry, each would then be considered Jewish after the ceremony.[33] Essentially, with this law, France outdid the Germans once again because German laws made no mention of what a two-person 'mixed-heritage' marriage could be considered. The Vichy government also went further than the Nazis with their policies in relation to the status of Jews married to full Aryans. In Vichy France, if an individual had two or three Jewish grandparents, that individual was considered a Jew despite their Aryan spouse, and was legally eligible for deportation.[34] The Nazis, on the other hand, insisted that these individuals, even if fully Jewish, should not be deported, and should be given favorable status over other Jews.[35] In fact, an Aryan woman whose Jewish husband was to be deported to a concentration camp appealed to the Germans rather than the French because she felt she had a better chance of them allowing him to stay.[36] This law shows that the Vichy government not only continued to create and add to previous racial laws, but that they were also unafraid to go beyond the racism found in Nazi policy when creating their own.

The final major laws created by the Vichy government and aimed at Jews were the statutes of summer and fall 1941. Essentially, these laws affected both students and those in the liberal professions. For students, Article I of the 21 June 1941 law decreed:[37]

> The number of Jewish students permitted to inscribe each year to study on a faculty, school, or institute of higher education cannot exceed 3% of non-Jewish students inscribed for that same year during the prior academic year.

As for the liberal professions, Article IV, on 16 June, stated the following:[38]

> The number of persons defined in Article I of 2 June 1941, admissible to be a lawyer, may not exceed, in the jurisdiction of each Court of Appeals, 2% of the total of non-Jewish lawyers inscribed at the Bar of each jurisdiction.

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[32] Ibid., 60-61.
[33] Ibid., 61.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid., 65.
[37] Ibid., 82.
[38] Ibid., 83.

In effect, little by little, Jews were slowly being squeezed out of various professions all on account of themselves or their grandparents practicing or having practiced Judaism.

French response to these racial laws was almost non-existent. Generally speaking, there was a positive reception by judges, lawyers, and law professors to the 3 October statute.[39] As Weisburg says in *Vichy Law and the Holocaust in France*, there was "a yearning among mainstream French lawyers for the kind of legislation that Vichy provided early against foreign, and specifically immigrant, Jewish influences at the bar."[40] Essentially, these laws would decrease competition in both the real world and in the classroom by limiting the number of Jews allowed in each, which may have seemed favorable consequences to some, despite the racism and disregard for the ideals of the Revolution that they created. Also, while there were a few protests, there was no organized response to these laws, despite the fact that French lawyers were quite capable of it.[41] It must be noted, also, that the few that did protest were neither disempowered nor punished, nor did their protests create hardships in their careers.[42]

There are a few more things to briefly note in relation to Jewish policy and regulations, the Vichy Government, and Germany. By February 1942, a curfew in Paris came into effect, banning Jews from the streets between 8pm and 6am.[43] Next, by 29 May 1942, a German ordinance began to require all Jews over age six to wear a yellow Star of David in the Occupied Zone.[44] As in other European cities, segregation by German decree became reality in Paris. Jews always traveled in the last Métro car, and they could not attend the cinema, museums, cafés, or the theatre.[45] Wireless sets and Jewish bicycles were even confiscated.[46] However, these were not the only things to be taken from Jews. As elsewhere in Europe, Aryanization eventually took hold in France. On 18 October 1940, "provisional administrators were assigned to all Jewish property," and by 26 April 1941, the provisional administrator was given permission to sell these properties "to Aryans or to liquidate them, with proceeds going to the state."[47] By mid-1941, Vichy, by its own accord, extended Aryanization to the Unoccupied Zone.[48] Vichy even

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[39] Ibid., 49
[40] Ibid., 50.
[41] Ibid., 49, 51.
[42] Ibid., 49.
[43] Adler, 11.
[44] Ibid., 12. Also, despite Pétain's anti-Semitism and relative indifference to Jewish decrees, he forbid this ordinance to extend into the unoccupied zone. Even after November 1942, when France was fully occupied, the Jews of that area still were not required to wear the star (Paxton 184).
[45] Webster, 135.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Paxton, 176.
[48] Weisberg, 238.

extended seizure to businesses patronized by Jews, something that the Germans had not even done.[49]

Essentially, these laws and regulations helped not only to fuel French anti-Semitism even more, but also to make being Jewish extremely undesirable. Gentiles cringed at the thought of being mistaken for a Jew. For instance, in Marcel Ophlüs' documentary, *La Chagrin et la Pitié*, a man says that he actually took out an ad in a newspaper to proclaim to readers that he was not Jewish, despite his "Jewish sounding" surname of Klein.[50] In this ad, he also says that he is Catholic and a decorated World War I veteran. Essentially, he felt that he would lose business at his shop if there was suspicion that he was Jewish.

This same problem is explored in another film, *Monsieur Klein*. This film tells the fictional story of a French Gentile in Paris who is mistakenly sent a Jewish newspaper.[51] When Monsieur Klein discovers the newspaper by his door, he seems mortified and eager to set things right immediately. His first stop is to see the head of the Jewish newspaper. When asked if a friend may have signed him up, Klein replies that it was not possible because "no one would have played such a joke on [him]." Later, at the police station, Monsieur Klein explains that there may be a second Klein in Paris; a Jewish Klein. Despite this, he still must provide proof that he is not Jewish. His father tells him that his family has been French Catholic since the reign of Louis XIV and that their name originated in Holland. Monsieur Klein then asks his dad for his grandparents' birth certificates to prove his Gentile French ancestry, but finds he must send for his grandmother's certificate in Algeria. This delay eventually causes his arrest and deportation. Essentially, *Monsieur Klein* shows that even the suspicion of Jewish blood could lead to arrest and deportation in Vichy France.

Many Jews, mostly foreign and denaturalized, were deported east or sent to French concentration camps. The first round-ups of foreign Jews in Paris began in May 1941, when immigrant men were taken to camps outside of Paris.[52] Afterwards, internments were continuous, including arrests from 20 to 23 August 1941, in which 4,230 Jews were seized and sent via city bus to Drancy, a French concentration camp in suburban Paris, which was run entirely by French police.[53] In fact, Paul Webster points out in *Pétain's Crime* that treatment in these French camps "was often barbaric and was compared by survivors to the cruelty of the German SS."[54]

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[49] Webster, 239.
[50] Marcel Ophélüs (dir.), *La Chagrin et la Pitié*, 1969.
[51] Joseph Losey (dir.), *Monsieur Klein*, 1976.
[52] Adler, 11.
[53] Webster, 161.
[54] Webster, 3.

Perhaps the most significant date relating to round-ups and deportations of Jews, however, would be the "black" day of 16 July 1942, known as the *Rafle du Vel d'Hiv*, in which 14,000 Jews in and around Paris were rounded up for deportation.[55] It was organized by the Paris police under the German SS and Gestapo; however, this is not to say that the Paris police proceeded with these roundups against their will.[56] Original German intentions had been to round up Jews aged sixteen years and older, yet the French showed such zeal in the operation that they began arresting children.[57] Since the round-ups in 1941 had only affected men, it was mostly women and children who were sent to the Vélodrome d'Hiver, a bicycle stadium.[58] There were approximately 12,884 people arrested, including 5,802 women and 4,051 children.[59] Living conditions during this internment were atrocious, with six toilets that "soon became blocked", and no room to lie down.[60] Not to mention, food and water were scarce, and only two doctors were allowed in the stadium to "treat the sick and dying."[61] Next, according to *Le Chagrin et la Pitié*, the Germans had not anticipated children, and only the parents were deported, leaving the children behind and creating a problem. While awaiting a decision from Berlin, a priest supposedly suggested saving the children to Pierre Laval, president of the Vichy government, by sending them to America. His reply, however, was that the children must also be deported because he was "preventing disease." The film later notes that all of these children were eventually deported to camps and gassed to death upon arrival.[62] Also, since the number of Jews captured during the *Rafle du Vel d'Hiv* was 'disappointing', Vichy decided to "transfer stateless Jews from [French camps] in order to fill scheduled trains to Auschwitz.[63] Furthermore, another large scale round up occurred just a few months later, on 14 September 1942.[64] In the months in between these events, Jews had only been arrested on the streets for minor infractions, such as for carrying false papers or violating curfew.[65] Now, French police in Paris had decided to go door to door to make arrests at private homes.[66] With this raid, 200 foreign Jews were captured and sent to Drancy.[67] Lastly, deportations also occurred in the

[55] Annette Insdorf, *Indelible Shadows: Film and the Holocaust*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 70.
[56] *Le Chagrin et la Pitié*
[57] Ibid.
[58] Webster, 159.
[59] Ibid, 19.
[60] Ibid., 160.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid., 19.
[63] Webster, 167.
[64] Susan Zuccotti, *The Holocaust, the French, and the Jews*, (New York: Basic Books, 1993), 157.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Ibid.

Unoccupied Zone, and were the sole decision of the Vichy government. Operations involved 10,000 police and "military-style operations" to "run down Jews hiding in the mountains or forests."[68]

The Catholic Church also played an interesting role within Vichy France. It was one of Vichy's greatest allies. Conservative Catholic journals even "endorsed measures against the Jews".[69] In fact, relations were even good between the Occupation forces and Cardinal Suhard, the Archbishop of Paris. However, many Christians were also willing to protest in various ways. Christian centers aided Jews with food while priests wrote fake baptismal certificates and letters to Pétain questioning Jewish treatment. There were even efforts to save Jewish children in a variety of ways. For example, one priest managed to hide eighty-four children with families in Lyon.[70] When this priest's actions were discovered, he refused to give up their locations and was put under house arrest. Similar actions can also be seen in *Au Revoir les Enfants*, a film based upon director Louis Malle's boarding school experiences during the War. In this film, viewers are introduced to a Jewish boy taking refuge in a Catholic boarding school, thanks to Catholic priests. The boy, Jean, is eventually betrayed by one of the kitchen workers. When the Gestapo arrives, they arrest three Jewish boys, along with Father Jean, the priest who hid them. Later, viewers discover that the boys died at Auschwitz, and Father Jean at Mauthausen. Essentially, this film helps to show that not all Catholics supported the Vichy government or agreed with its policies.

Despite the efforts of some individual Catholics, many Jews still perished during the Vichy years. Of the approximately 76,000 Jews deported from France, "about 15,000 were French and all the rest were immigrants."[71] Upon Liberation, 10 percent of French Jews and 40 percent of "foreign" French Jews had died.[72] The differences in numbers are likely due to the fact that Vichy demanded, when possible, that foreign and denaturalized Jews be deported before State Jews.[73] In essence, during World War II, France was no longer a land of refuge for immigrant Jews because France was now assisting in their persecution.

In using both textual and film resources, this paper has shown that thanks to Pétain's Vichy government, France was among the nations who helped the Nazis make the Holocaust happen. During these years, France not only collaborated with the Nazis, allowing German policies in the Occupied Zone, but they also created anti-Semitic laws that were "more racist than the

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[68] Webster, 165.
[69] Zuccotti, 139.
[70] Webster, 172,
[71] Birnbaum, 368.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Adler, 14.

[German] Nuremberg Laws."[74] Also, while the French may not have realized that they were sending Jews to their deaths by sending them "east," they still took part in deportations and willingly sent Jews towards unknown destinations. Vichy actions during World War II took France back to a time before the French Revolution, and back to a time when *Liberté, Egalité,* and *Fraternité* for all had not yet been realized.

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[74] *Le Chagrin et la Pitié.*

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Ireland's Magdalen Asylums: An Analysis of the Controversy between Public and Academic Accounts and a Re-examination of the Available Documents

ALISA ORRIN

INTRODUCTION

In 2002, director Peter Mullan released his film *The Magdalene Sisters*, shocking audiences around the world with his exposure of "one of the great injustices of the second half of the twentieth century," young Irish women's incarceration in the Magdalen asylums.[1] Mullan's film is the story of four teenage girls forced into the asylums by their families because they had been raped, had a pregnancy out of wedlock, or had been deemed too pretty and in danger of seducing men. These girls are incarcerated in the Sisters of Mercy's Magdalen home where they are forced to do constant unpaid laundry work under the direction of brutally authoritative and corrupt nuns. These nuns abuse the girls with beatings and humiliation as they greedily pocket the money made from their laundry enterprise. Mullan's film depicts these young women inmates as victims, unable to leave the asylum until they find a way to escape, and in one case, until a family member comes to have his sister released. In contrast, Mullan shows the convent nuns, priests and Irish society to be corrupt perpetrators, imprisoning the young and innocent female victims. Interestingly, this fictional film has become historical fact for many, as movie reviewer Philip Kemp states:

> Watching Mullan's film, which won the Golden Lion at Venice, you have to keep reminding yourself that these things happened in Ireland well within living memory [...]. The Magdalene Laundries, run by the Catholic order known as [...] the Sisters of Mercy, held women convicted of no crime. These women were denied all contact with the outside world, subjected to harsh discipline and forced to labour unpaid for years, often for the rest of their lives. It's estimated that some 30,000 women were subjected to this howling injustice; the last Magdalene Laundry closed in 1996.[2]

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[1] Gary Crowdus, "The Sisters of No Mercy: An Interview with Peter Mullan," Cineaste 28, no. 4 (2003): 26.

[2] Philip Kemp, "The Magdalene Sisters," review of *The Magdalene Sisters*, dir. Peter Mullan, Sight & Sound 13, no. 3 (2003): 52.

The last two facts outlined by Kemp are shown against a black screen at the end of Mullan's film, turning the movie from a fictional drama to a seemingly historical account. Mullan's film, however great, is not a history. Yet, it has somehow become the only public representation of Magdalen asylums. In her review essay Leanne McCormick confirms, "This film, and the television documentaries that preceded it, have come to represent the true picture of life inside Magdalene Laundries. To offer any alternative position has come to be seen as condoning the brutalities of the institutions and, moreover, supporting the abuse of power by the Catholic Church. Consequently, the fiction of a motion picture has become accepted historical reality."[3]

Few historical studies have been done on Magdalen asylums in Ireland to counter or support Mullan's portrayal of the homes. Head of the Women's History Project in Ireland, Dr. Maria Luddy, wrote extensively before *The Magdalen Sisters*'s release on prostitution and rescue work in Ireland. She contends that Magdalen asylums had existed since the late 18th century as institutions for the rescue of prostitutes. Contrary to Mullan's view, Luddy argues that the Magdalen asylums were not entirely oppressive institutions. Prostitutes used them to their own advantages, entering and re-entering, to seek shelter from a society that shunned them, food, and instruction in reading and needlework, preparing them for a more respectable line of work.[4] Luddy does, however, suggest that the institutions may have changed in the 20th century:

> In the nineteenth century Magdalen asylums were not the places of incarceration they became in the twentieth century. The function of these asylums changes significantly from the late nineteenth century where they become homes for wayward girls or unmarried mothers. They become places where the shame of families [can] be hidden away."[5] Yet thus far, Luddy has not studied the transition, how the homes changed, or what the homes of the 20th century were like. Contrary to Luddy's studies, Dr. Frances Finnegan, in her 2001-released book *Do Penance or Perish*, argues: "Attempts have [...] been made to class the nuns as victims [...]. [...] Their own fanatical commitment, the

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[3] Leanne McCormick, "Review Essay: Sinister Sisters? The Portrayal of Ireland's Magdalene Asylums in Popular Culture," Cultural and Social History 2, no. 3 (2005): 373.
[4] Maria Luddy has written extensively on the topic. See: Maria Luddy, "'Abandoned Women and Bad Characters': Prostitution in Nineteenth-Century Ireland," Women's History Review 6, no. 4 (1997): 485-504. Maria Luddy, "Prostitution and Rescue Work in Nineteenth-Century Ireland," in *Women Surviving: Studies in Irish Women's History in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, edited by Cliona Murphy and Maria Luddy (Dublin: Poolbeg Press, 1989), 58-84. Maria Luddy, "Whose History," History Ireland 8, no. 4 (2000): 16-19. Maria Luddy, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
[5] Luddy, "Whose History," 17.

distasteful relish with which they carried out their activities, their determination to inflict their rule on others and their refusal to change until forced to do so, counter such excuses, which, in any case, fail to account for the harsh treatment highlighted in recent exposures of the system."[6] Finnegan continues, "For feminists, the knowledge that many penitents were victims, helplessly submitting to their situation, is unappealing."[7] Here, it is evident that Finnegan's work portrays Magdalen asylums in Ireland as prisons, nuns as brutal perpetrators, and penitents as helpless victims throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Finnegan's book, like Mullan's film, has come to represent the true picture of Magdalen asylums, as the back cover of her book proclaims, "The *first* study of the asylums, *Do Penance or Perish* illuminates this shameful episode in Irish history.[8]

As noted above, Finnegan claims that her study evidences "the harsh treatment highlighted in the recent exposures of the system." In her review of Finnegan's work, Luddy explains:

Magdalen asylums were 'discovered' by the Irish public in 1993 when the remains of deceased inmates of an asylum, run by nuns of Our Lady of Charity of Refuge at High Park in Drumcondra, Dublin, were exhumed, cremated, and reburied in Glasnevin cemetery. [...] The exhumation provoked much media attention and public protest at what appeared to be another example of the inhumanity expressed by nuns towards those who had been in their care. From the mid-1990s, the evidence of a number of documentaries,[9] based on the oral testimony of women who had been incarcerated in these asylums, testifies to physical cruelty and sexual abuse being perpetrated on hapless inmates whose only 'sin' was to transgress an unforgiving moral code. No commentator observed that such Magdalen asylums had existed in Ireland since 1767 and that, over the course of two centuries, at least twenty-four such establishments, supported by the Irish public, existed throughout the country.[10]

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[6] Frances Finnegan, *Do Penance or Perish: Magdalen Asylums in Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 243-244.
[7] Finnegan, 244.
[8] Emphasis added by the author.
[9] *Sex in a Cold Climate*, dir. Steve Humphries, The Cinema Guild, 1998, videocassette.
[10] Maria Luddy, review of *Do Penance or Perish: A Study of Magdalen Asylums in Ireland*, by Francis Finnegan, The American Historical Review 110, no. 2 (2005): 557.

If, as Luddy suggests, the asylums had been around for so long, as well as conflicting historical accounts as to what they were and how they functioned, why are Mullan and Finnegan's representations of the asylums most prominent in the public's mind? Why has no study concentrated on the history of Magdalen asylums in Ireland from the 19th to 20th century, accounting for the transition in their function? Few analyses, if any, attempt to explain or reconcile the contradictory images of Magdalen asylums and penitent women in Ireland.

This study attempts to move the discussion on Magdalen homes away from labeling women as victims and trying to find someone to blame for the creation and perpetuation of the asylums toward showing, through a re-examination of the documents, how Magdalen asylums had been in existence for a long time, were not entirely oppressive institutions, how their function changed in the twentieth century, and how women still managed to exercise agency within the institutions throughout the twentieth century and until their closing.

BACKGROUND: A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF IRELAND'S MAGDALEN ASYLUMS

The first Magdalen asylum opened in the late 18th century and multiple Magdalen homes were created throughout Ireland during the 19th century. Dr. Rosemary Raughter describes the creation of the first Magdalen asylum: "One of the earliest examples of organized female philanthropy in Ireland was the Magdalen Asylum, founded in Lesson Street in 1766 by Lady Arbella Denny for the reception and reform of penitent prostitutes."[11] Lady Denny was the daughter of the first earl of Kerry, the widow of Colonel Arthur Denny, and devoted her life to charity work.[12] Raughter continues, explaining how the home operated: "Managed for many years by Lady Arbella herself with the assistance of her deputy, Mrs. Usher, the institution was under the supervision of a committee of ladies, whose members visited and took a personal interest in the inmates, instructed them in moral and spiritual matters and in useful skills, and helped them to find employment on departure."[13] O'Dowd provides a more in-depth look at Lady Denny's Magdalen asylum:

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[11] Rosemary Raughter, "A Natural Tenderness: the Ideal and the Reality of Eighteenth-Century Female Philanthropy," in *Women and Irish History: Essays in Honour of Margaret MacCurtain*, edited by Maryann Gialanella Valiulis and Mary O'Dowd (Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1997), 73.

[12] Mary O'Dowd, *A History of Women in Ireland, 1500-1800* (Harlow, England: Pearson Education Limited, 2005), 56.

[13] Raughter, 73.

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Between 1767 and 1798, 388 women entered the Asylum. The girls chosen had an average age of nineteen although the youngest was twelve and the eldest thirty-two. Most were recommended by a governor of the institution or a clergyman but by the 1780s, members of the girls' family, often a girl's mother, petitioned Lady Denny directly on their relatives' behalf. A small number of women opted to petition for entry in their own name.[14]

Maria Luddy further explains a few of the policies of the Leeson Street Magdalen asylum: "It was decided that the 'penitents', as the inmates were called, should spend between 18 months and 2 years in the asylum and that they were to leave only if their future could be guaranteed in some way, either through acquiring a position or returning home."[15] Lady Denny gave women a cash bounty, religious books, needles, and tambour handles upon their departure in hopes that they would engage themselves in the textile business over prostitution. While the success rate of Lady Denny's institution is not clear, what is evident is that the majority of women were given the full cash bounty upon departure, able to convince Lady Denny that they had reformed.

Other Magdalen asylums opened throughout Ireland in the nineteenth century, run by philanthropic women, like Denny, and later, by female religious from the Protestant, Catholic, and Presbyterian faiths. Luddy explores the creation of these Magdalen homes:

> In the nineteenth century at least twenty-three asylums or refuges were established to rescue and reclaim 'fallen women'. [...] Of these asylums at least fourteen operated in Dublin, most others being attached to convents, especially those of the Good Shepherd sisters, the Sisters of Charity, and the Mercy nuns. Six of the Dublin asylums were run by religious congregations or Catholic clergymen, the rest had Protestant clergymen as trustees, governors or committee members.[16]

In the mid-nineteenth century, most of the asylums run by philanthropic women were taken over by nuns or religious congregations.[17]

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[14] O'Dowd, 131.

[15] Luddy, "'Abandoned Women and Bad Characters': Prostitution in Nineteenth-Century Ireland," 494.

[16] Luddy, "Prostitution and Rescue Work in Nineteenth-Century Ireland," 61.

[17] Luddy, "Prostitution and Rescue Work in Nineteenth-Century Ireland," 70-71.

A RE-EXAMINATION OF THE AVAILABLE DOCUMENTS

The contradictions in the historical scholarship on Magdalen asylums call for a re-examination of the available documents, keeping the preceding historical overview in mind. While most of the records of the institutions have not been made available to the public, and recently, not even to researchers, inmates' testimonies, government documents, asylums' pamphlets, and philanthropists' works have been published. The following is my analysis of Magdalen asylums in 19th and 20th century Ireland.

Magdalen Asylums in Nineteenth Century Ireland

In 1866, the Sisters of Mercy put out a guide espousing certain regulations that should be followed in the establishment of Magdalen asylums in Ireland. Although these principles are merely guidelines, they do shed light on what life in the asylums may have been like, and at the very least, what life was supposed to be like. Some of the guidelines are strict: "Few, if any secular visitors should be admitted to parts of the asylum where the penitents are engaged;" "It is desirable to adhere to the rule [...] of cutting closely the hair of each before admitting her amongst other penitents;" and "When the penitents are permitted to see the members of their immediate families [...] a vigilant, trustworthy person should be present, who will hear and see all that passes."[18] Other guidelines are both humanitarian and repressive: "We consider it best then, to endeavor to provide for those who have during their probation—which should be a fixed time, not less than three years—given proof of a real enduring conversion, by either restoring them to their families or getting them situations; while, at the same time, we would encourage those who choose the better part of remaining safe in the asylum for life;" "Labour should form part of their penance; it should be proportioned to their strength and capacity;" "On the judicious employment of their time their conversion greatly depends, but they ought not to be over-worked or harassed, least it may deject them."[19] While the Sisters encourage penitents to stay for life, interestingly they do not believe asylums should be founded under such a strict principle:

> Establishing an asylum on the condition that the inmates should be confined in it for life, or else leave it destitute and unprovided for, prevents many from entering, who though they desire to withdraw from their sinful life, shrink from perpetual enclosure; it peoples Protestant asylums with Catholic unfortunates, because those hold out hopes of future character and situation. This may

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[18] "Guide for the Religious Called Sisters of Mercy," 1866, in *Women in Ireland, 1800-1918: A Documentary History*, edited by Maria Luddy (Cork: Cork University Press, 1995), 57-59.
[19] "Guide for the Religious Called Sisters of Mercy," 57-59.

be seen in our cities where the Catholic asylums are established on the above principle.[20]

This statement suggests that competition for penitents existed between Protestant and Catholic asylums in Ireland. The Sisters of Mercy here express that they do not want potential penitents to be turned away from their Catholic asylums by a seemingly repressive regulation, confining the girls in the homes for life. The Sisters also seem to be aware that Protestant asylums are helping women penitents find suitable employment and home upon departure, knowing they need to do the same to attract penitents. Further, the final statement in this passage suggests that there existed more repressive Catholic asylums where penitents were detained for life. The Sisters of Mercy, however, strive to create a more humanitarian asylum. Whether or not their asylums actually followed the guidelines is difficult to gauge from a guidebook. Further research is needed with the asylums' records and visitors' or inmates' testimonies.

Another portrait of Magdalen asylums in the 19th century comes from Eliza Orme and May Abraham, assistant commissioners to the Royal Commission on Labour. In 1893, they published their report on the employment of women in Ireland, inspecting the conditions of a multitude of factories throughout Ireland. In touring the Magdalen asylums, the commissioners note, "In the Magdalen Homes the penitents are asked at stated intervals if they elect to remain in the home or to work elsewhere, and in the latter case efforts are made to find a suitable situation." In their inspection, they further record:

> The workrooms visited were beautifully fitted up with all the latest appliances for washing and ironing. The floors were clean, the ventilation good, and the sleeping accommodation very comfortable and arranged. A separate bed is allowed to each girl, and the dormitories are of ample size. The infirmaries are also carefully planned and tended. The training in laundry work or other occupations is systematically given by competent teachers.[21]

This description mirrors that of the Sisters of Mercy's guidebook, as well as the description of Lady Denny's home. Penitents are not forced to remain in the asylum and are provided with a clean and comfortable place to live and work in, as well as training in domestic work. Orme and Abraham visited a variety of different factories, noting which had the worst conditions

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[20] "Guide for the Religious Called Sisters of Mercy," 58.
[21] Royal Commission on Labour HC, "Government Report on the Employment of Women in Ireland," 1893-4, in *Women in Ireland, 1800-1918: A Documentary History*, edited by Maria Luddy (Cork: Cork University Press, 1995), 222.

for women. For example, Orme and Abraham state, "The worst cases met with in sanitary accommodation are the following at No. 637 in Dublin, there is no ventilation except through the windows, and these can seldom be open because the dust blows in upon the linen."[22] In contrast, and as detailed *above, the Magdalen homes visited are described as orderly and* accommodating places for women to live, work and gain training in domestic skills.

In his book *The Great Social Evil*, English philanthropist William Logan surveys the extent, causes, results, and remedies of prostitution in England and Ireland. While Logan does not extensively study the Magdalen homes, he does mention them in his section on the remedies for prostitution. Logan maintains, "In many of our larger towns there is still a great want of asylums for the reception of females who are wiling to abandon their sinful course."[23] While Logan does not provide a critique of the conditions in the home, he argues that more homes should be constructed. Logan's account thus illustrates how the public was aware of Magdalen asylums in the 19th century, and that some, like Logan, supported the institutions and called for more to be developed.

Magdalen Asylums in the Twentieth Century Ireland

One account of Magdalen homes in the 20th century has hardly come to the attention of the public or researchers of Irish history. In 1956, writer Halliday Sutherland published her travels through Ireland in her book *Irish Journey*. One chapter of her travels is devoted to her visit to a Magdalen asylum run by the Sisters of Mercy in Galway. In speaking of the former Mother Superior of the asylum, Sutherland's companion, Colonel Stacpoole, states, "She was a grand girl. She used to thrash the inmates of the Magdalen Home, but they loved her."[24] Here, the Colonel seems to support the Mother Superior's harsh style of punishment. Later, in speaking to Sutherland about the Magdalen home, the new Mother Superior maintains, "These girls do not work like other girls. If a girl gets tired of working in the laundry we do not force
her to work."[25] She continues, "The new chapel and recreation hall cost a lot. Also this year we hope to give the girls a more attractive uniform. On Sundays they're allowed to wear cosmetics."[26] In asking a nun if a girl may leave whenever she chooses, Sutherland is met with the reply, "No, we're not

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[22] Royal Commission on Labour HC, 216.
[23] William Logan, *The Great Social Evil: The Causes, Extent, Results, and Remedies* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1871), 199.
[24] Halliday Sutherland, *Irish Journey* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1956), 81.
[25] Sutherland, 82.
[26] Sutherland, 82.

as lenient as all that. The girl must have a suitable place to go."[27]   When Sutherland asks the Mother Superior about discipline, she explains, "We give them a good scolding when they need it," and for more serious offences the Mother Superior explains, "we stop their food," but only for a day.[28]   This account, like the guidebook from the 19th century, seems both humanitarian and oppressive.   The nuns care about providing the girls with a good recreation room and only making them work to the extent that they can handle.   Punishments, however, seem harsh, and a girl may not leave whenever she chooses.   While Sutherland's account does give a portrayal of a Magdalen asylum in the 20th century, it only describes one home and is possibly censored by the nuns in charge of the asylum.   In asking the Bishop for permission to visit the home, the Bishop asks Sutherland,   "Are you prepared to submit anything you propose to write about the Magdalen Home for approval by the Mother Superior of the Sisters of Mercy?"[29]   Sutherland replies that she is, and is only then permitted to visit the asylum and write it into her *Irish Journey*.   Her report, thus, cannot be read without taking this possible censorship into account.   It does, however, present readers and scholars of history with one view of life in a 20th century Magdalen asylum.

One of the only publicly recognized studies of 20th century Magdalen homes is Steven Humphries' documentary *Sex in a Cold Climate*, which exposes the brutalities of the institutions through the testimonies of three former inmates and one woman who grew up in a Catholic orphanage attached to a Magdalen asylum.   The documentary alternates from scenes of interviews with the women to black and white footage of Magdalen asylums and Irish society.   Between the women's testimonies, a narrator pieces together the history of the asylums, beginning with an explanation of the increasing domination of the Catholic Church in 20th century Ireland.   The narrator describes how the Church considered sex outside of marriage a sin, and how the Church's doctrine ruled until recently.   One of the interviewees concurs, "You did not criticize it."   The documentary then unfolds the stories of four women against a background of melancholy classical music.   Phyllis Valentine grew up in a Catholic orphanage until age 15, in 1955, when the nuns told her they had found her work in a laundry.   Once at the Magdalen laundry, she found out she was not going to be paid for her laundry work, and had been put there because the nuns were afraid she was too pretty, would seduce men, and become pregnant.   Phyllis was kept in the asylum until 1964.   Martha Cooney was sent to the asylum at age 14 because her family discovered she had been raped by a cousin.   This rape implied she was a

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[27] Sutherland, 82.
[28] Sutherland, 83.
[29] Sutherland, 81.

wayward woman, needing to be imprisoned to repent her sin. Martha spent four years in the asylum, unable to leave until another family member came to have her released.

The other two women's testimonies detail some of the harsher treatments penitents and orphans were subjected to in the Magdalen asylums. Christina Mulcahy, an inmate who had been sent to the home for having a child out of wedlock, describes how the priest exposed himself to her during confession. When Christina confided to the Mother Superior what had happened, the nun told her to keep her mouth shut. The priest, shortly thereafter, denied Christina's accusation. When she then refused to go to confession, the nuns cut all her hair off. Brigid Young, who grew up in the orphanage attached to Limerick's Magdalen asylum, explains how she was beaten after conversing with a Magdalen from the asylum next door. She details how the nuns forced her to then open her swollen and bloodstained eyes to see her true self in the mirror. Brigid, like Christina, further describes how she was abused by a priest, claiming that when being blessed after her beating, her priest wrapped his legs around her, "masturbating all over her dress." Brigid begins to cry as she recalls how the priest did this three times more.

The documentary ends with the women explaining how their incarceration in the asylums affected their later lives. Martha Cooney never marries because she cannot handle anyone having authority over her again. Phyllis marries and has children but never feels right about the sexual part of her relationship. While she describes her husband as understanding for a while, they eventually part. The documentary closes with Phyllis maintaining: "nuns were not supposed to be cruel; they were supposed to give mercy."

While I do not wish to slight the horrible experiences of these women and other penitents, their testimonies do need to be questioned, and the documentary, critiqued. Although these four women detail the horrors of the institutions, they also explain how they were able to rebel. Phyllis, at age 21, stopped doing her work, missed mass, and let her hair grow out. When the nuns came to cut it, she threw such a fit that they let her be. Christina refused to leave the recreation room when one nun threatened her with a belt. She told the nun that if she would just be allowed to see her child, she would go back to work. When the nun came threateningly close, Christina yelled, "You lift your hand and hit me, I will kill you!" The nun then backed down, allowing Christina to miss work and mass. After three years in the asylum, Christina escaped through the side entrance.

It is also important to note that these women detail experiences in only three Magdalen asylums in Ireland. As earlier stated, there were many more

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homes, run by more than just Catholic orders of nuns. The documentary, however, presents itself as a definitive study of the asylums, ending with the same claim Mullan's film does: "The last laundry closed in 1996. It is estimated that 30,000 women passed through during this century." Interestingly, Mullan has claimed to have based his film, *The Magdalene Sisters*, on this documentary. In an interview with Cinéaste magazine, Mullan speaks of the influence the documentary had on him: "I didn't know what institution it was talking about, I didn't know who put her away for being too pretty, but, by the time it had finished, I was just in tears."[30] Mullan continues, explaining how he prepared to make his film: "There's very little literature, so I didn't do any research to begin with. I decided that I wanted to write a screenplay as much about my reaction to the subject as it was about the subject."[31] The documentary and Mullan's limited, one-sided view of the asylums may further be due to the fact that Frances Finnegan was the only further historical resource consulted in the making of the documentary.[32] Interestingly, all three accounts portray the same picture of Magdalen asylums. No mention is made that the asylums existed since the late 18th century and that the function of these asylums changed in the 20th century from being rescue homes for prostitutes to asylums for unwed mothers and society-perceived wayward women.

CONCLUSION: IMPLICATIONS FOR HISTORICAL STUDY AND FURTHER RESEARCH

This study demonstrates how, contrary to the public discourse, Magdalen asylums had been in existence for over 200 years, their function changing at the beginning of the 20th century from being rescue homes for prostitutes to hiding places for unwed mothers and shameful daughters. Although the function of the asylums changed, women penitents still exercised agency in the asylums, as evidenced by the testimonies of inmates who rebelled through growing out their hair, missing mass, refusing to work, and in some cases, leaving the asylum through escape. Further research is needed, taking the transition in the asylums' function into account, exploring and explaining why this may have happened. Unfortunately, the documents available to study this topic have become scarce. In "Whose History," Luddy concludes:

> There is a fundamental question about whose history this is. Who should actually control access to these documents? [...] Will [institutions] ever allow someone to do that kind of social,

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[30] Crowdus, 28.
[31] Crowdus, 28.
[32] See credits of *Sex in a Cold Climate*.

institutional history? And if they don't, isn't that making Irish
society even poorer in the sense that we won't ever know how a
particular institution dealt with cases. It's not just about the
institution but also about society's attitudes at that time which
might come through that institution's records.[33]

As Luddy suggests, the hostile public discourse condemning the
Catholic Church for the running of Magdalen asylums has led to their
reluctance to release their institutions' documents. The asylums are further
anxious to enter the private records of former penitents into the public debate.
However, once the blame is dropped, and a more objective study of the
asylums resumed, records will most likely be released for researchers to
continue piecing together the puzzle of the history of Ireland's Magdalen
asylums. It will ultimately be up to both these researchers and the public to
approach these documents and studies with a critical eye. Until we are
willing to grapple with the complete and complex history of the asylums,
fictional films, such as *The Magdalene Sisters*, will unfortunately stand as·
historical truths.

[33] Luddy, "Whose History," 18.

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Maintaining the "Stasi-Quo":
An Examination on the Origins and Activities of the East German Secret Police

DEVON WITHERELL

The Ministry of State Security (MfS), or the "Stasi," as it was more commonly known, was the East German security and intelligence agency from 1950-1989. They were the secret police whose basic mission was to control any resistance to the socialist structure in place at the time, and, much like the KGB in Russia, they were involved in almost every aspect of East German society, from the political and economic systems to the daily activities of its citizens. While throughout most of its existence the Stasi enjoyed an almost legendary or mythical status in reference to the extent of its power and infiltration into differing levels of society, not much was known of how it really worked until after communism fell and the Stasi files were made available for public viewing. The fact that East Germans at the time knew little about the internal workings and the range of activities engaged in by the Stasi actually gave to the Stasi much of the power citizens already believed it had.

The East German state would not have been able to exist as long as it did without the influential activities of the Stasi, but the question remains of why and how this secret police force was so effective at dealing with opposition in comparison with secret police agencies in other Eastern Bloc states. The question may never be answered definitively because of the variety of tools and methods the Stasi had at its disposal, but the fact that the Stasi was able to act as a sort of preventative "scarecrow" to oppositional voices within East Germany seems to have been the most effective way anti-communist resistance was controlled.

STASI BEGINNINGS

Before one can look at the Stasi itself, one should examine the situations preceding it to better understand how an agency like this came into being. Due to the fact that the Stasi existed in a communist-ruled state, this means an investigation into the beginnings of communism in Germany is in order. German communists were known as Spartacists in the beginning stages of the communist movement in Germany, and, in 1919, they formed the German Communist Party (KPD). This party was of particular interest to Lenin and the Bolsheviks in Russia and was central to their global plans for

spreading the Revolution.[1] In March of 1919, when the Bolshevics held a founding Congress for the creation of the Third Communist International, or Comintern as it was eventually known, the leader of the KPD, Rosa Luxemburg, was suspicious of the true motives of the organization and sent a delegate to Moscow to vote against it. The KPD was the only communist organization outside of Soviet Russia with an independent voice, and, as such, the Comintern came into being without KPD support. In an unexpected twist of fate, and without the planning of the KPD or the Bolshevics, Luxemburg was killed in the Berlin Rising of 1919 before her delegate even left Moscow. Without their independent-minded leader, the KPD voluntarily joined the Comintern and was then subjected to increased interference from Moscow.[2]

The Comintern then formed the Western European Secretariat (WES) in October 1919, headquartered in Berlin, which was a secret agency which was staffed by the top ranks of the KPD, with the exception of the highest positions which were appointed by Lenin himself. Secrecy was the basis of much of the WES's work, with particular practices stemming from those developed by the Bolsheviks. These Bolshevik rules of working legally and illegally, using false papers and identities, ensuring communications between underground agents, and establishing middle-class fronts had not been used in Western Europe before the WES came to Berlin, and they served as a starting point for the espionage practices of later agencies in the area, including the Stasi.[3]

The KPD had already established its own secret organizations, and, in 1921, the Comintern and the KPD began working on strengthening the two that already existed, which were the N-group for intelligence work and the M-group for training the communist military forces, and adding two more (not until about 1923), which were the Z-group for political infiltration and the T-group for sabotage and eliminating KPD traitors.[4] These groups proved ineffective in the attempted revolution of 1921, but are of note as they show the Comintern continually trying to increase its control over the KPD. A revolution was attempted again in 1923, but still failed due to a lack of worker support and too many essentially useless secret agencies. This resulted in a change in Soviet foreign policy, namely the temporary abandonment of seeking revolution in Europe and focusing more on the Soviet homeland and Asia.[5] This forced the KPD, because of a drop in Soviet funding, to consolidate and reorganize their secret agencies, which led

[1]David Childs and Richard Popplewell, *The Stasi: The East German Intelligence and Security Service,* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), pp. 1-2.
[2] *Ibid.,* pp. 2-3.
[3] *Ibid.,* pp. 4-5.
[4] Childs and Popplewell, *The Stasi,* p. 11.
[5] *Ibid.,* p. 17.

to an extensive network of spies, who were used by the Soviets in the early 1930s to gather information for the construction of Soviet industry in Germany.[6]

All of this suddenly came to a halt when Hitler seized power over Germany in February of 1933. The KPD had been under observation for some time beforehand by the regular police, and the Gestapo used this acquired information to quickly dismantle the group. This, however, is only part of the reason the largest communist party outside of Soviet Russia was so easily toppled. The reason the police had so much information on the KPD was due to the ineffectiveness of the N- and Z-groups to stop the infiltration of the KPD by agents of the regular police. The very fact that the KPD had secret organizations so closely tied to Russia also allowed Hitler to wage an accurate propaganda campaign against the party, calling it a "subversive puppet of Moscow."[7]

The Soviet policies about the organization of the KPD should also be considered for reasons why the KPD fell so quickly. The Soviet need for a centralized command structure, one that would allow for easy Soviet control, proved problematic when all the leaders of the KPD had either been imprisoned or fled. This created a situation where the KPD became all followers and no leaders. The focus on threats from the Left, like the Social Democrats (SPD), also caused problems as it completely ignored threats from the fascist Right and left the working class movement divided and weak.[8] All of these factors allowed the Gestapo to eliminate quickly any possible threats the KPD may have posed.

The problems for the KPD were compounded by the fact that the Soviets were in no rush to rebuild the party. This was the case even though the Soviets lost many of their German intelligence agents, which was a sizable loss considering that, before Hitler came to power, they operated in Germany, through the KPD, more than in any other nation in Europe.[9] There were some rumors of a grass-root rebuilding of the KPD by means of resistance cells called the Fünfergruppen, or "groups of five," but it would seem to be largely fictitious in nature as they did not carry out any plan of military significance during the Second World War. The idea did, however, appeal to German communists and those distraught over the lack of an armed resistance to Hitler before the end of 1944.[10]

In 1945, after the war, the Soviets quickly formed the Soviet Military Administration in Germany (SMAD), which had control over all aspects of life in Soviet-occupied Germany. It had two main objectives, which were to

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.
[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.
[8] Childs and Popplewell, *The Stasi*, p. 19.
[9] *Ibid.*, p. 17.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 20-21.

build up an effective German communist party and to establish a German security service, both relying on the development of the other.[11]   Due to the decimation of the KPD under the Nazi regime, the new KPD included many opportunists trying to gain the favor of the Soviets, and as such their reliability and dedication was doubtful at best. Stalin decided the best way to rectify the weakness of the KPD was to force a merger between the SPD, the other left-wing party (ironically, the "enemy" the KPD had so opposed before Hitler took over), and the KPD, forming a new party called the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED).[12]   In the beginning, the SED had to rely on the opportunists of the KPD cooperating with, or at least submitting to the SED party, and the only way to make sure they did was to use coercion, which meant the SED had to depend immediately on its security forces.

To address the security service issue, the SMAD started with the regular police, who at that time were decentralized, inefficient, and often corrupt. The first major step to the creation of an independent security organization came in July of 1946 when SMAD reorganized and centralized the regular police. The regular police was managed by the new German Administration of the Interior (DVdI), which of course answered directly to SMAD, and because SMAD was under Soviet control, it effectively gave the Soviets complete power over the police.[13] With this authority, the SED and SMAD began indoctrinating the police force in Marxism-Leninism, a practice that continued until the end of the Eastern German state.

In August of 1947, a special department of the police called K-5 was formed, which acted to de-Nazify the Eastern Zone. The officers of K-5 were trained by the Soviets, and, in an attempt to win the confidence of their Russian teachers, they would frequently try to "out-cruel" their instructors, which led to K-5 having a reputation worse than that of the Gestapo. Their de-Nazification function quickly expanded to include the surveillance and elimination of anyone opposed to the regime, typically through accusations of being a "National Socialist."[14] This accusation was particularly focused on any who opposed the merger of the KPD with the SPD, or anyone not supportive of the SED. Many of those who simply refused to join the SED, or were coerced into joining, attempted to start underground movements fighting against the SED, and the Soviets and the K-5 perceived them to be more of a threat than the Nazis.[15] At the same time K-5 was being formed, another police force called the Committee for the Protection (or Defense) of National Property was formed, which was aimed to protect national property

[11] Ibid., pp. 33-34.
[12] Childs and Popplewell, The Stasi, pp. 34-35.
[13] Ibid., pp. 35-36.
[14] Childs and Popplewell, The Stasi, pp. 38-39.
[15] Gary Bruce, "The Prelude to Nationwide Surveillance in East Germany: Stasi Operations and Threat Perceptions, 1945-1953," Journal of Cold War Studies 5, no. 2 (2003): 6-7.

from misuse and sabotage.[16] Both groups were chaired by the same person, Erich Mielke.

On October 7, 1949, the East German State officially was formed, just five months after the creation of the Federal Republic of Germany, i.e. West Germany. Just four months later, on February 8, 1950, the Committee for the Defense of National Property became the Ministry of State Security (MfS) and the SED now had its own autonomous state security service.[17] The GDR's first Minister of the Interior, Dr. Karl Steinhoff, described the duties of the MfS to the East German parliament as follows:

> The most important tasks of this Ministry will be to protect the national enterprises and works, transport and national property from plots of criminal elements as well as against all attacks, to conduct a decisive fight against the activities of hostile agent networks, subversives, saboteurs and spies, to conduct an energetic fight against bandits, to protect our democratic development and to ensure an uninterrupted fulfillment of the economic plans of our democratic free economy.[18]

This description was not only rather vague, but it also showed that the MfS was created without any real legal restrictions on its activities.

Even though it had no real restrictions, originally the MfS, or Stasi, was mainly an internal security service as it was too small in numbers and too weak to be much else. There were few intelligence professionals in the Stasi despite the Soviet training of the K-5, and there was a need for ideological training and commitment of Stasi officers. Russian KGB officers served in the MfS in large numbers and continued to do so after the Stasi had strengthened, and, from this, one can assume that the MfS was mostly likely closely tied to the KGB. In fact, they both claimed the same heritage that dated back to the Russian revolution, they both viewed Lenin and Dzerzhinsky (who was considered the father of communist intelligence) as "spiritual fathers," they used similar interrogation techniques, and officers in both held military ranks to distinguish them from regular police (after 1952 for the Stasi officers).[19] These similarities show that even though the MfS was considered autonomous, there was a heavy Soviet influence on the Stasi, and this influence can be traced back to the beginnings of espionage practices in Germany.

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[16] Childs and Popplewell, *The Stasi*, p. 44.
[17] *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46.
[18] *Ibid.*, p. 47.
[19] Childs and Popplewell, *The Stasi*, p. 49.

LIFE WITH THE STASI

The Stasi maintained from its beginning that in order to eliminate possible threats to the SED, eyes and ears are needed everywhere. The fact that they believed this can be seen in the massive emphasis the Stasi placed on "unofficial employees," or informants (IMs). This can also be seen in the actual MfS guidelines put out over the years. For example, the code of 1958 read, "The unofficial employees are the most important factor in the fight against the secret activities of the class enemy."[20] In 1968, "The unofficial employees are at the very core of all the Ministry for State Security's politically operative work."[21] The unofficial employees are actually what gave the Stasi its power; without the informer giving the MfS information and without the constant threat of being spied on, opposition to the SED would have been much easier to develop. Even though it was easy to convince oneself that the Stasi could not watch *everybody*, the fact that they could watch *anybody* generated enough fear that few people, if any, wished to have any part in discussions involving opposition.[22] Through its informants, the Stasi infiltrated all aspects of society, allowing it to "smooth out" the problems of the SED regime before major consequences occurred.[23] Ironically enough, by infiltrating *all* aspects of society the SED and the Stasi itself were also infiltrated which meant that not only the general citizens but members of the SED and Stasi also felt fear that someone could be watching them and pressure to act according to the current wishes of the party.[24] Complete social permeation combined with the organization hiding identities of informants from each other, which created a situation where unofficial employees were often unknowingly spying and reporting on other unofficial employees

On account of the importance the Stasi placed on their unofficial employees, and the bureaucratic organization of the Stasi, there were many guidelines for the Stasi officers regarding how to recruit and maintain their contacts, as well as on how to document the information given to them. The Stasi operated on the Focusing Principle, which the Stasi defined as the:

> Important basic principle of the politically operative work and the management thereof aimed at guaranteeing that actions aimed at clarifying and combating all subversive enemy attacks are goal-

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[20] Barbara Miller, *Narratives of Guilt and Compliance in Unified Germany*, (New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 9.
[21] *Ibid.*
[22] Nessim Ghouas, "Basic Reasons for the Effectiveness of the East German Ministry for State Security's Departments M and 26," *Intermarium* 6, no.3 (2003): 8-9.
[23] Catherine Epstein, "The Stasi: New Research on the East German Ministry of State Security," *Kritika* 5, no. 2 (2004): 324-25.
[24] Andrew Glaeser, "Monolithic Intentionality, Belonging, and the Production of State Paranoia: A View Through Stasi onto the Late GDR," In *Off Stage/On Display*, ed. Andrew Shryock (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 256-57.

oriented and preventative in nature – and are achieved by concentrating all operative forces and means, including the time, technical and financial resources available, on the most important areas of operation, that is on those objects, areas, territories, groups and individuals where preventative security measures are required.[25]

They used this principle to dictate in what areas they should look for recruits. This caused an uneven distribution of informants throughout the population, tending to have unofficial employees concentrated in cultural, religious, and oppositional groups. The Stasi usually recruited from within a group as opposed to recruiting someone to infiltrate it, as it was easier this way since those within the group already trusted the recruit. This caused quite the paradoxical situation for the recruit though, as now they are working both for and against the group the Stasi wanted to be monitored, which was a common occurrence for the unofficial employees.

Stasi officers used Requirement Profiles to help direct the recruitment process, which gave a description of ideal qualities an informant should have.[26] Using these as a guideline, informants were picked first based on political convictions, i.e. how strongly they supported the state; those with strongest convictions were obviously the easiest recruits. If the principles were lacking, they would then attempt to convince the recruit that there was a politically or morally justifiable purpose to working for the Stasi. If that method failed, the officer would then appeal to the personal needs or interests of the recruit as somewhat of a bribe. This was viewed negatively, however, due to the constant requirement of "feeding" this need. If all else failed, then the officer had to resort to coercion, which required some sort of indiscretion made by the recruit that could be used against them.[27] Coercion was generally not considered to be "correct procedure," but when it was used the officer still tried to make the coercion seem positive by portraying it as a way to make amends for the "crime" the recruit committed.[28]

From the standpoint of the unofficial employee, there were many different motives behind an informant's willingness to work for the Stasi. Some had a respect for authority or the state and believed that they were doing the right thing, some convinced themselves that they had no choice but to work with the Stasi, some were willing because of (the acceptance of) material gifts, some wanted to follow the path of least resistance, and others were simply scared.[29] Others have also said they agreed to work for the Stasi

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[25] Miller, *Narratives*, p. 20.
[26] Miller, *Narratives*, p. 22-23.
[27] *Ibid.*, pp. 41-45.
[28] *Ibid.*, p. 49.
[29] Miller, *Narratives*, pp. 67-68.

to try and help or mediate the situation.[30] The argument could even be made that a reason someone would become an informant was to regain some of the power that had been taken away from him or her by the SED regime.

Ironically, the Stasi rarely tried to stop someone from refusing to be an informant, and even less frequently came through on any threatened repercussions. Author Peter Nadas described his encounter with the Stasi when he was summoned to "provide additional information." He was led into a room, which was quickly locked behind him, and was then asked questions, bribed, and blackmailed. He decided not to help, because he believed "One does not betray one's friends, and in such circumstances not even one's enemies. One does not betray or turn in a fellow human being, and anyone who does is without honor."[31] He was allowed to leave with no repercussions, which shows how, even though citizens felt pressure to comply, they had the option to deny the Stasi some of its authority by not assisting it.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the passing of the Stasi Document Law in 1991, which released the Stasi files to the public, there has been increased attention brought to the MfS and, more specifically, to the unofficial employees of the MfS. Originally the files were opened to the victims as a "symbolic act of reconciliation on the part of the new German parliament."[32] The new German government agreed to release the files, but they would first be screened and then made available only to certain people for specified reasons.[33] While it initially seemed like a plan that would help heal the psychological wounds the SED had inflicted, the "outing" of these unofficial employees, who themselves had been victimized by the SED regime and the Stasi, the plan may actually turn them into perpetrators and scapegoats, and it has the possibility of preventing German society from dealing with these issues by preoccupying them with finger-pointing and essentially blaming the victims.[34] In this way, the argument can be made that the unofficial informants are *still* suffering under the long-term effects of the Stasi.

The relationship between the citizens of the GDR, the Stasi, and the GDR itself was a complex one, and each was intertwined with the others. The background of Russian influence in Germany, the introduction of espionage tactics, and the introduction of an extreme fascist party served as groundwork for allowing the GDR, SED, and Stasi to become what they did,

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[30] *Ibid.*, p. 114.
[31] Peter Nadas, "Our Poor, Poor Sascha Anderson," trans. Ivan Sanders, *Common Knowledge* 8, no.3 (2002): 536-7.
[32] Alison Lewis, "Reading and Writing the Stasi File: On the Uses and Abuses of the Files as (Auto)biography," *German Life and Letters* 56, no. 4 (2003): 378.
[33] Paul Maddrell, "The Revolution Made Law: The Work Since 2001 of the Federal Commissioner for the Records of the State Security Service of the Former German Democratic Republic," *Cold War History* 4, no. 3 (2004): 154-5.
[34] Paul Cooke, *Representing East Germany Since Unification*, (New York: Berg, 2005), 66-67.

None of this would have been possible, though, were it not for the compliance of the citizens. Specifically, the Stasi would not have been nearly as effective had it not been for the power the citizenry gave it. Not only did they "agree" to be recruited and supply the information, allowing for the crushing of any who may have opposed the GDR communist regime, but the fact that *they* supplied the information, that they watched themselves and spied on themselves, created this ever-increasing society of fear that ultimately stymied most oppositional thoughts and ideas. The Stasi became bigger than itself, in effect a psychological "scarecrow" that did not allow for any questioning of the system out of absolute fear of it. The people of the GDR either refused to deal with the psychological stress caused by the situation or convinced themselves they were not really hurting anyone because they were reporting banal and harmless information. However, while they may not have hurt anyone directly (which was not always true), by simply participating in the system, they hurt everyone indirectly, as their actions allowed the structure to continue existing. Whether it was the genius of those running the MfS or just a fluke of events, one can only hope that the damage done by this overwhelmingly powerful agency will finally fade, so that the wounds of a now-unified Germany may heal.

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