

# FROM STEWARDESS TO FLIGHT ATTENDANT: Navigating the Evolution of Care Work, Eroticization, and Commodification in the Airline Industry, 1930s–2000s

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*The stewardess occupation of the 1930s–1960s was highly restricted; only young, unmarried, conventionally attractive white women skilled in caring for their primarily male passengers could get the job. However, a long-standing series of discrimination lawsuits and activist movements in the 1960s–1970s led to the removal of these restrictions. This paper seeks to ask two questions. In the absence of these restrictions, which bodies were selected as desirable for the flight attendant occupation, and how did they embody it? Since the flight attendant industry shifted from a highly exclusive, racialized, and gendered occupation to one that theoretically anybody could join, what, then, defined the occupation? This paper draws from cultural, media, legal, and labor studies to inform historical and gender studies scholarship. This paper argues that although the removal of restrictions allowed for men, people of color, and other populations to enter the profession, the industry remained racialized and gendered the same, with white women comprising most stewardesses and flight attendants. Furthermore, this paper groups care work, eroticization, and commercialization as the fundamental organizing forces of the stewardess and flight attendant industries, and the historical development of “pink-collar work” in America at large.*

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A sharp contrast exists between the stewardess of the 1930s–1960s and the flight attendant of the 1970s–2000s in the American airline industry. Between the 1930s and 1960s, airlines chose stewardesses based on a set of occupational restrictions: age, race, gender, height, weight, and even marital status. Companies used these criteria to assemble cabin crews comprised of young white women. The 1960s and 1970s marked the beginning of a shift in the flight attendant occupation. Celio Diaz Jr. and Patricia Banks-Edminston filed lawsuits that challenged the exclusion of men and people of color from the industry. These cases, alongside the wider impact of the Civil Rights Movement, the Women’s Rights Movement, and the Queer Liberation Movement, played a role in dismantling the restrictions imposed by airlines. In two decades, airline carriers gradually removed restrictions on age, race, gender, height, and marital status. In 1980, “stewardesses” became “flight attendants,” and the occupation was opened to men, queer people, and people of color. This paper analyzes historical shifts in the occupation, focusing on the transition from the restricted stewardess of the 1930s–1960s to the unrestricted flight attendant of the 1970s–2000s.

Scholars have provided cultural and labor histories of the stewardess, tracing the restricted occupation from the 1930s through the 1970s. Historian Kathleen Barry, the author of *Femininity in Flight*, traced through the creation of the stewardess, the

Post-War glamour girls, the Jet Age, up through the Women's Rights Movement and stewardess liberation in the 1970s. Barry argued that laborers needed to perform gender as their job to embody the highly glamorized stewardess.<sup>1</sup> Journalist Victoria Vantouch builds upon Barry's work in *Jet Sex*, which provides a focused analysis of the stewardess industry from the 1950s–1960s. She traces the stewardess's metamorphosis from the “ideal bride” (1945–57), to the Jet-Age career girl (early 1960s), to a seductress who performed in-flight strip teases (mid-1960s), all while connecting the industry to a broader reflection of the American domestic ideal of the 1950s and the sexual revolution in the late 1960s.<sup>2</sup> These works provide a thorough account of the stewardess's embodiment of American conceptions of gender, sex, and the body from the 1940s–1970s.

Scholars have also provided cultural, economic, and labor histories of the unrestricted flight attendant occupation of the 1970s–2000s, offering rich insights into the pathways taken by men, queer people, and people of color to gain their footing in the occupation. Phil Tiemeyer provides a history of the male flight attendant in *Plane Queer*, illustrating that men have participated in the industry since its inception. He argues that the male flight attendant has stood out as plainly queer for the entirety of the profession due to his willingness to perform the “women's work” of service and stewarding.<sup>3</sup> Alongside men, black women were only begrudgingly allowed into the stewardess industry. In *Cabin Pressure*, sociologist Louwanda Evans argues that the racial standard of flight attendants as white caused African American flight attendants to find themselves in racial and gendered positions in which they did not fit.<sup>4</sup> *Deregulating Desire*, by contemporary historian Patrick Murphy, builds upon Tiemeyer's work to chronicle the tensions between the flight attendant activism of the 1970s and the pro-business and pro-family social movements of the post-1970s. The conservative backlash to flight attendants' feminist organizing aimed to make male breadwinners and female domesticity the central organizing principles of society, and thus attempted to undo the wage increases and benefits won by flight attendants in the previous decade.<sup>5</sup>

The current scholarship on the flight attendant offers comprehensive analyses of the stewardess occupation of the 1930s–1960s, labor and capitalistic histories, and detailed studies on the experiences of minority groups establishing their roles in the industry. However, there is a dearth of cultural histories, especially regarding how the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion have evolved with the creation and removal of occupational restrictions. This paper aims to fill a gap in the existing scholarship by providing a cultural history of the transition from the restricted stewardess to the unrestricted flight attendant occupation. What was the impact of the removal of

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<sup>1</sup> Kathleen Barry, *Femininity in Flight: A History of Flight Attendants* (Duke University Press, 2007), 3.

<sup>2</sup> Victoria Vantouch, *Jet Sex: Airline Stewardesses and the Making of an American Icon* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

<sup>3</sup> Phil Tiemeyer, *Plane Queer: Labor, Sexuality, and AIDS in the History of Male Flight Attendants* (University of California Press, 2013), 3. Tiemeyer's work traces the history of the male flight attendant from the 1930s through the 2010s. Tiemeyer calls attention to the fact that men were employed as flight attendants in the 1930s and 1940s, and illustrates the carrier-created gendering of the role, wherein large American carriers prevented men from working as stewards in the restricted period.

<sup>4</sup> Louwanda Evans, *Cabin Pressure: African American Pilots, Flight Attendants, and Emotional Labor* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2013).

<sup>5</sup> Ryan Patrick Murphy, *Deregulating Desire: Flight Attendant Activism, Family Politics, and Workplace Justice* (Temple University Press, 2016), 227.

restrictions? In the absence of regulation, which bodies were selected as desirable for the flight attendant occupation, and how did they embody it? Furthermore, this paper works to understand the occupation more broadly. Since the flight attendant industry shifted from a highly exclusive, racialized, and gendered occupation to one that theoretically anybody could join, what, then, defined the occupation?

I argue that although the removal of restrictions allowed for men, people of color, and other populations to enter the profession, the industry remained racialized and gendered, with white women comprising the majority of stewardesses and flight attendants. Going a step further, I argue that commercialization, care work, and eroticization are the thematic throughlines that defined the flight attendant industry throughout both the restricted and unrestricted periods.

Before proceeding, it is crucial to define the thematic concepts of commercialization, care work, and eroticization. Commercialization is the process of making a product or service available for sale to the public. This paper understands commercialization as the airline industry's efforts to profit from its services, specifically from the stewardess or the flight attendant. In *The Managed Heart*, the sociologist Arlie Hochschild uses the flight attendant industry of the 1970s to understand the commercialization of human feeling. Hochschild argues that airlines used the emotional labor performed by flight attendants to differentiate themselves by the degree to which they controlled the appearance and personality of their public-facing workforce.<sup>6</sup> As defined by the economist Nancy Folbre, care work can be understood as “labor taken out of...a sense of responsibility for other people.”<sup>7</sup> Care work is labor performed for the benefit of other people, even when those individuals are not present; it can be direct and relational, such as feeding a baby, and indirect, such as cooking or cleaning. The sociologist Catherine Hakim’s *Erotic Capital* builds upon Hochschild’s work to offer a useful understanding of eroticization. Erotic capital, which is a combination of aesthetic, visual, physical, social, and sexual attractiveness, can be learned and embodied.<sup>8</sup> Hakim argues that Hochschild’s “emotional labor” is its own element of erotic capital, explicitly stating that the interactive skills of female air hostesses add to their erotic capital.<sup>9</sup> Eroticization, then, is the work of regarding or creating something sexually. This paper builds upon Hakim’s work, terming the eroticization of flight attendants as the training, marketing, and treatment of the laborers with erotic capital.

With this scholarship in mind, this paper considers the occupation of the flight attendant on three planes: the commercial, the embodied, and the perceived. The airlines created and advertised the job, introducing the restrictions of the occupation to the public and describing which laborers could embody it. But occupations were far from stagnant; they were produced and reproduced by each person who took the job. Each employee was tasked with managing their body and behavior to align with the stipulations set by the organization. Their bodies were then perceived by the public—in national ad campaigns and throughout the airplane galley—adding to the mythos of the flight attendant. Throughout this cycle, commercialization, care work, and eroticization existed in dynamic conjunction with one another, working in tandem

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<sup>6</sup> Arlie Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (University of California Press, 1983), 103.

<sup>7</sup> Nancy Folbre, “‘Holding Hands at Midnight’: The Paradox of Caring Labor,” *Feminist Economics* 1, no. 1 (1995): 74.

<sup>8</sup> Catherine Hakim, “Erotic Capital,” *European Sociological Review* 26 (March 2019): 501.

<sup>9</sup> Hakim, “Erotic Capital,” 500.

to shape the occupation of the flight attendant during the restricted and unrestricted periods.

The primary sources in this study are training manuals, advertisements, newspapers, magazines, legal cases, and personal attestations of employees in the flight attendant industry. This archival base allows me to blend the professional, cultural, legal, and social to show how the cabin crew occupation has been continuously created, embodied, and re-imagined on the scale of the individual and the occupation as a whole. This paper will begin by outlining the selection criteria and participation conditions of the restrictive stewardess role, showing that the industry was a white and feminized space from its inception.

I will illustrate how the care work performed by the stewardess mirrored domestic labor, and how airline carriers mapped erotic capital onto their flight attendants, marketing them as “ideal brides.” This paper will describe how airline corporations began to commercialize the stewardess, eliding the stewardess with the airplane as a marketing tactic. These three thematic pillars will provide a comprehensive overview of the restricted occupation and the factors that created the lasting, iconic image of the American stewardess.

Secondly, this paper will examine the efforts to remove the occupational restrictions in the 1960s and 1970s. Although this section will not be exhaustive of these two decades’ activist efforts and reactions, it will illustrate the airline industry’s intense resistance to change. Examining *Diaz v. Pan Am* and the infamous “Fly Me” ads in conversation with one another will delineate the difficulties and growing pains of change.

This paper will conclude by examining the unrestricted occupation of the 1980s–2000s, arguing that despite the industry being theoretically open to all, it continued to be primarily composed of white women. The term flight attendant attempted to signal gender-neutrality, and the increased amount of male flight attendants brought complex perceptions of gender as it related to the job. Some male attendants were viewed through a queer lens, and others were seen as more traditionally masculine. This dual characterization highlights the occupation’s struggle to contend with the traditionally feminized care work of the flight attendant as the industry transitioned away from domestic-focused roles and began to emphasize the laborers’ work as safety professionals. Despite these changes, this section reveals that flight attendants were still regarded as eroticized figures by their coworkers and passengers. Similarly, although flight attendants were no longer explicitly elided with their airlines, they remained internally commercialized. Care work, eroticization, and commodification continued to shape the occupation in racialized and gendered ways, long after the removal of the enforced industry standards.

### **Part One: The Restricted Stewardess Occupation**

There is no business like the airline business, a strictly masculine world with a stewardess as its symbol. Men write the rules and set the standards for stewardesses—they vary only slightly in all airlines, although there are more than 40 lines in the United States, including Alaska and Hawaii. Men do the important interviewing, make the final selections and head up the stewardess departments.

—Kathryn Cason, *How to Become an Airline Stewardess*

The occupation of the stewardess was highly restricted and feminized from its inception. On February 12, 1930, Ellen Church, a nurse and a trained pilot, proposed to Steve Stimpson, the division traffic agent at Boeing Air Transport (later United Airlines), that cabin service should have nurses. In the early years of consumer aviation, passenger comfort and safety were the primary hurdles to selling tickets.

Church argued that women could help passengers with fear of flying or nervous breakdowns, illustrating that care work was built into the profession from the beginning. The occupation was heavily restricted from the onset; airline stewardesses could not stand taller than 5'4" or weigh more than 115 lbs. At the time, it went without saying that the industry would be limited to white women, who were instructed to treat passengers as they would treat guests in their own homes. The broader conceptions of white, middle-class femininity were integral to creating and approving the profession.

The stewardess role was created for and perpetually available to young, slender, conventionally attractive white women who cared for and served white men. When reporting about the first batch of stewardesses, the *New York Times* was quick to highlight the narrow constraints of the stewardess, writing, "These girls who qualify for hostesses must be petite; weight 100 to 118 pounds; height 5 feet to 5 feet 4 inches; age 20 to 26 years."<sup>10</sup> The article went on to note that stewardesses were subject to a "rigid physical examination" four times each year, reassuring readers that the laborers were therefore in the "bloom" of physical fitness.<sup>11</sup> The stipulations were stringent, to say the least.

In the 1930s, planes were meticulously balanced; pilots, stewardesses, passengers, and luggage alike were weighed before takeoff.<sup>12</sup> In the 1950s, airlines did away with weighing passengers and their luggage but maintained the physical requirements of the flight attendant. Although there was no logistical need for flight attendants to maintain a specific weight—or gendered or racial identity, for that matter—the continued regulation of the laborers implies that occupational restrictions served larger commercial usefulness.

During the 1960s and 1970s, the regulations for the role of the stewardess had expanded, but they still fell into the norms of idealized American femininity, which most valued young, petite, and attractive women. The 1964 guide, *How to Become an Airline Stewardess*, listed the physical characteristics that a candidate must clear before becoming eligible for the position:

"Height: 5'2" to 5'8"; Weight: 110 to 135 pounds; Age: 20 to 28; Marital Status: Single; Eyes: 20/50 without glasses or contact lenses; Hair-Complexion-Teeth: Clean and good."<sup>13</sup>

A glamorized figure, the stewardess was marketed as the very best of American womanhood. The requirement for laborers to be single was justified through the logic that "having a married stewardess would take some of the fun out of the job for the single girls—and the male passengers,"<sup>14</sup> suggesting a sexual availability and permissiveness. Airlines were unflinching in their enforcement of this bodily regulation upon their staff—supervisors could stop stewardesses at any time to check their hair, makeup, and even fingernails, and stewardesses could be fired at any time for gaining weight. The intense regulation of the bodies of stewardesses was an enduring hallmark of the occupation.

Despite these strict regulations, the airline industry was an employer's market. The stewardess occupation was one of the few opportunities women had to join the workforce or travel independently, and the coveted role was in high demand. In 1961, United received over 50,000 applications for about 350 openings.<sup>15</sup> The carrier's

<sup>10</sup> "Air Hostess Finds Life Adventurous," *New York Times*, April 12, 1936, 86–87.

<sup>11</sup> "Air Hostess Finds Life Adventurous."

<sup>12</sup> Roger Mola, "Then & Now: A Weighty Matter," *Smithsonian Magazine*, February 2009.

<sup>13</sup> Kathryn Cason, *How to Become an Airline Stewardess* (McFadden Publications, 1964), 11.

<sup>14</sup> *Dayton Daily News*, September 30, 1965.

<sup>15</sup> Robert Kuttner, "A Union of Their Own," *American Prospect*, September 28, 2023.

acceptance rate was a staggeringly low 0.7%, which meant that the airlines had incredible power in carefully curating the people allowed to participate in their workforce.



Figure 1: Presenting The Losers<sup>16</sup>

Airline carriers prided themselves on their ability to select and manage their workforce. The 1967 “Eastern Air Lines Losers” marketing campaign exemplified the commercialization of the carefully selected, highly trained stewardesses of the restricted era. The campaign boasted that after an analysis of “her face, her make-up, her complexion, her figure, her weight, her legs, her grooming, her nails and her hair,” only 1 in every 20 girls physically qualified for the occupation.<sup>17</sup> The advertisement showcases an applicant pool of exclusively white women, and its notation of an applicant’s “complexion” and “grooming” as selection criteria reveals a conscious acknowledgement of the occupation’s bias towards white, middle-class femininity. The advertisement then identifies a second round of selection based on factors such as voice, personality, enthusiasm, and stamina because the airline carrier did not want stewardesses who would be “careless in serving your dinner, or unconcerned about

<sup>16</sup> “Presenting the Losers,” *Time*, September 29, 1967.

<sup>17</sup> “Presenting the Losers.”

your needs.”<sup>18</sup> These characteristics allowed stewardesses to perform care work—both physical and emotional—for their passengers.

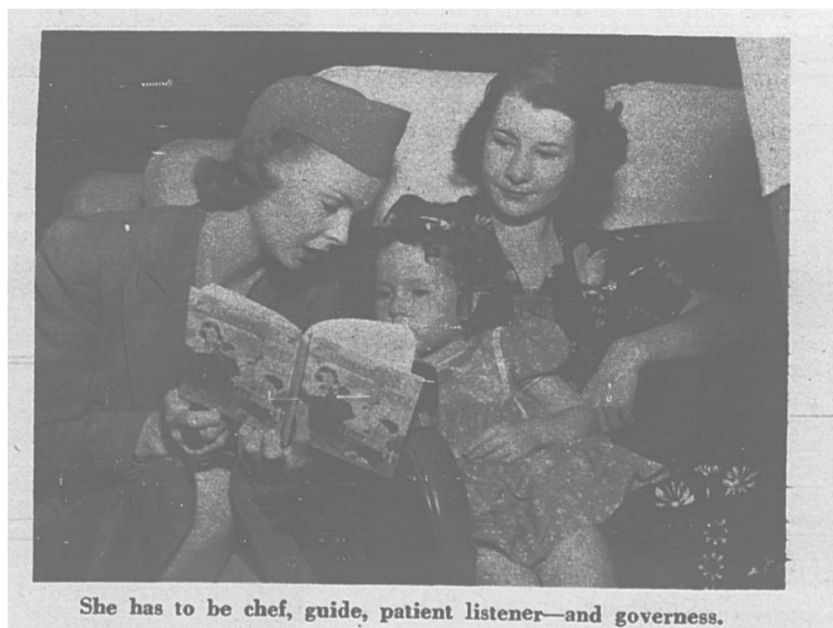


Figure 2: *She has to be a chef, guide, patient listener—and governess.*<sup>19</sup>

The stewardess in the restricted era was trained to provide care work that conformed to dominant understandings of femininity; she simultaneously needed to be a “chef, guide, patient listener—and governess.”<sup>20</sup> Throughout the cabin, stewardesses swatted flies, made beds, shined shoes, and kept their passengers feeling safe and entertained.<sup>21</sup> The domestic labor that flight attendants were expected to perform encompassed care work for men and children, creating a can-do woman who could seamlessly offer any service the passenger requested: “Perhaps you’d like a quick snooze—she’ll tilt your chair and tuck a soft pillow under your head. A glass of milk? A shave? A can of baby food for your six-month-old? You can have them all—at 8,000 feet.”<sup>22</sup> The addition of “governess” into her job description showed that the care of children, even if they were not her own, was interwoven with the American understanding of the female gender. Braniff Airlines stewardess Muffet Webb explained to WBAP-TV that “the air hostess also must learn to be patient and to cope with many varied situations from mixing baby formulas and warming bottles to serving full course meals.”<sup>23</sup> A stewardess’s expected care work involved intimate management of the passengers, reinforcing the occupation’s reputation as the very best of American womanhood.

Besides creating the image of the stewardess as a domestic homemaker, the airline industry also eroticized the role, marketing stewardesses as “ideal brides.” This approach reinforced the gendered nature of the job. One of the most explicit examples of industry-imposed sexualization was the “Miss Skyway Pageant,” which aimed to

<sup>18</sup> “Presenting the Losers.”

<sup>19</sup> Wendell Knowles, “Hostess in the Sky,” *Liberty*, March 2, 1946.

<sup>20</sup> Knowles, “Hostess in the Sky.”

<sup>21</sup> Diane Tedeschi, “The Flight Attendants,” *Air and Space Magazine*, 1993, 61.

<sup>22</sup> Knowles, “Hostess in the Sky.”

<sup>23</sup> News Script: Airline Hostess is Named “Miss Skyway,” WBAP-TV, February 16, 1956, The Portal to Texas History, UNT Libraries Special Collections, University of North Texas.

find “the most ideal airline hostess in the nation.”<sup>24</sup> Launched in 1956, the pageant saw 300 hostesses from 22 airlines compete for the title, highlighting the occupation’s emphasis on adherence to beauty standards and idealized femininity. Muffett Webb became the first stewardess to win the pageant. Webb, a graduate of Southern Methodist University in home economics, termed the stewardess training “of value in preparing to be a home maker.”<sup>25</sup> In the 1960s, the average stewardess worked for 27 months, and 85% of the workforce resigned to marry.<sup>26</sup> This phenomenon was explained by Kathryn Cason in her guide, *How to Become an Airline Stewardess*, where she wrote that:

During her flying career [the stewardess] comes into personal contact with large numbers of people, some pleasant, some not, and acquires an enormous reservoir of tact and patience. Now, when that kind of a girl learns to cook, too, what man in his right mind wouldn’t rather see her standing in his doorway than an airplane’s?<sup>27</sup>

The “tact and patience” acquired by the stewardess through her interactions with the mostly male passengers of the restricted era resembled the emotional labor women at the time needed to perform towards their husbands. During the restricted era, especially in the 1950s, up to 80% of the flying public consisted of male businessmen.<sup>28</sup> The stewardess career was marketed towards young women as a training school for marriage—an “exciting, memorable, before-marriage interlude” which would teach them the social, emotional, and makeup skills to be good wives.<sup>29</sup>

The dual conception of the stewardesses as “ideal brides,” both domestic homemakers and sex objects, was commodified by the airline industry. Mary Wells, an influential advertising executive for Braniff Airlines, told *Business Week* outright, “When a tired businessman gets on an airplane, we think he ought to be allowed to look at a pretty girl.”<sup>30</sup> Laborers were made into “pretty girls,” meant exclusively for the male gaze and reduced to objects that would promote sales. The need for attractive young women to serve as flight attendants was justified through the airline’s rhetoric that they could provide “care” to the businessmen who made up the majority of travelers. This sentiment was echoed in an advertisement for United Airlines, which wrote, “Every United Stewardess knows a Friday night face when she sees one. It’s the tired face of a businessman who’s put in a hard week and just wants to go home . . . Extra care is different for every passenger. But they all get it.”<sup>31</sup> The advertisement not only touted a high degree of personalized attention towards their passengers, but implied that the flight attendants would provide “care” beyond just serving meals. In the restricted period, laborers were selected, trained, and ultimately advertised as stewardesses who embodied the dual roles of mothering servants and objects of sexual fantasy.

The restricted era further commodified the flight attendant by directly eliding the stewardesses and the airlines. As Chief Stewardess Fern Roberts wrote in the NY Airways Stewardess Manual, “You, as a stewardess, are our best sales medium. On every flight you should strive to uphold your salesmanship ability, as YOU are New

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<sup>24</sup> News Script: Airline Hostess is Named “Miss Skyway,” WBAP-TV.

<sup>25</sup> News Script: Airline Hostess is Named “Miss Skyway,” WBAP-TV.

<sup>26</sup> Cason, *How to Become an Airline Stewardess*, 11.

<sup>27</sup> Carson, *How to Become an Airline Stewardess*, 11.

<sup>28</sup> Roberta Lessor, “Social Movements, the Occupational Arena and Changes in Career Consciousness: The Case of Women Flight Attendants,” *Journal of Occupational Behaviour* 5, no. 1 (January 1984): 39.

<sup>29</sup> Cason, *How to Become an Airline Stewardess*, 11.

<sup>30</sup> “More Blue in Braniff’s Yonder,” *Business Week*, January 21, 1967.

<sup>31</sup> “The Boys with the Friday Night Faces,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 20, 1967.

York Airways.”<sup>32</sup> As Roberts suggested, the customer-facing nature of the job meant stewardesses humanized the airline to the passengers. Stewardesses were explicitly instructed to “embody” the airlines they worked for, bearing the burden of brand representation more than any other occupation in the airline industry. Stewardesses were taught to think of themselves as a “sales medium,” a commercialized figure whose job was to sell seats.

To “embody” the airlines, stewardesses were expected to manage their behavior and bodies rigorously. They were expected to maintain a pleasant personality and keep up with current events by reading the news. The stakes of this behavior management were high—rudeness to any passenger was grounds for dismissal. Jude Lindsey, a representative of Stewardesses for Women’s Rights, connected the publicity to the behavior of the men on the plane, telling the *San Francisco Chronicle*, “We are always wrong and the passenger is always right—no matter what.”<sup>33</sup> The prevailing customer-is-always-right mentality treated stewardesses as disposable and forced them to conform to strict emotional and physical management.

The restricted occupation of the stewardess was formed through care work, eroticization, and commercialization. As eloquently put by the *Financial Times*, “The industry was already rife with innuendo by the 1960s . . . it was a heady blend of uniform, authority, and servility, guaranteed to put more than your seat in an upright position.”<sup>34</sup> This observation, offered reflectively in conversation with the uniform designers of the restricted era, is perhaps the most salient representation of the mechanisms that allowed the stewardess to “sell” the airline. The “servility” displayed through the care work they performed for their passengers only added to the eroticization provided by their uniforms. The authority offered to customers was packaged and sold through the management and marketing of stewardesses.

The occupation of the stewardess, as understood from the 1930s through the 1960s, was primarily restricted by gender. Airline carriers built care work and erotic capital into the job, using stewardesses as their “sales medium.” Broader concepts of white American femininity, particularly the view that women were most valuable for their domesticity or sexual allure, significantly shaped the position. Stewardesses needed to, in Kathleen Barry’s words, perform gender *as the job*.<sup>35</sup> How did the occupation change when men entered the workforce in the 1960s and 1970s? What did laborers need to do to embody the expectations of the steward and stewardess roles?

### ***Part Two: The Transition Between the Restricted and Unrestricted (1960s-1970s)***

I think 1978 was a really interesting year, because many of the women I went to college with had one foot in old ideas and stereotypes, and the other foot in the future. It was kind of a confusing time for young women.

—Ann Hood, *Fly Girl: A Memoir*

A series of discrimination lawsuits and activist reforms gradually and painstakingly removed the restrictions imposed upon the stewardess occupation by airline carriers. In 1957, Ruth Carol Taylor and Patricia Banks-Edmiston separately filed suits with the New York State Commission Against Discrimination after their applications to

<sup>32</sup> N.Y. Airways, INC. Stewardess Manual, 1962, Archives Division, Box 1, National Air and Space Museum.

<sup>33</sup> *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 31, 1972.

<sup>34</sup> “Cabin Fever,” *Financial Times*, November 25, 2006.

<sup>35</sup> Barry, *Femininity in Flight*, 7.

work as stewardesses were rejected on the basis of race.<sup>36</sup> Both women were successful in their claims and eventually secured employment with Mohawk Airlines and Capital Airlines, respectively.<sup>37</sup> Ironically, Taylor was fired shortly after because she violated the marriage ban. In 1965, Betty Green Bateman won a landmark case against Braniff Airways that eventually removed the marriage ban. Bateman had been fired once Braniff discovered that she was married, but the decision was overturned by arbitration under Title IX.<sup>38</sup> These cases laid the groundwork for the removal of gender as a prerequisite for participation in the industry.

On April 17, 1967, Celio Diaz Jr applied for the position of “flight cabin attendant” with Pan American World Airways Inc. but was rejected because Pan Am restricted hiring to just females. Diaz filed a complaint under Section 703 of Title IX of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, arguing unlawful discrimination. The parties agreed that Diaz was denied because of his sex; the contention of the case was whether being female was a bona fide occupational qualification for being a flight attendant. A bona fide occupational qualification is a legally authorized restriction granted to employers that allows them to refuse to hire a person based on identifying characteristics.

On May 10, 1971, the US Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals handed down a decision that fundamentally changed the makeup of the flight attendant workplace. The court reversed the prior decision, ruling that “the primary function of an airline is to transport passengers safely from one point to another,” and that Pan Am must “take into consideration the ability of all individuals” to perform the job.<sup>39</sup> This remarkable decision redefined the occupation of the flight attendant, boiling the job down to its role in helping the passengers move from one place to another. It further dismissed the formal eroticization of stewardesses and the physical and emotional care work they performed as necessary to the occupation.

The same year the airline industry allowed men to work as stewards, the major carriers began to double down on the myth of the glamorized flight attendant. In the throes of the sexual revolution of the 1970s, airline carriers launched a new round of advertisements that further commercialized and eroticized the flight attendant, promising a newer level of care work for their customers.

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<sup>36</sup> Kayla Brooks, “Breaking Barriers in the Sky,” National Museum of African American History and Culture, September 28, 2023.

<sup>37</sup> “First Negro Airline Stewardess Hired,” *New York State Commission Against Discrimination Newsletter*, March 1958.

<sup>38</sup> “Meet the Flight Attendants Who Fought for Equality During the Civil Rights Era,” *Air and Space Magazine*, December 10, 2021.

<sup>39</sup> *Diaz v. Pan Am. World Airways, Inc.*, 442 F.2d 385 (5th Cir. 1971). Diaz filed with the EEOC in 1967 and then Miami’s Federal District Court in 1968. He lost his case at the district level but won his appeal in 1971.



Figure 3: *I'm Anne. Fly me. Fly National*<sup>40</sup>

Of particular interest is the “Fly Me” advertising campaign, which was launched by National Airlines in 1971. Created by Wells Rich Greene, the advertisements were known for using the sexual appeal of National Airlines stewardesses to create widely circulated, racy advertisements rife with innuendo. National began the campaign with an advertisement that featured a young, pretty woman smiling coyly under the tagline, “I’m Cheryl. Fly Me.”<sup>41</sup> The ad’s fine print asked rhetorically, “You think I’m just another pretty face? I’m not,”<sup>42</sup> before proceeding to describe the spectacular service and various routes provided by National Airlines. The campaign merged the laborers with the airline itself, running a 1974 ad that outright linked the two: “I’m Annie. Fly Me. Fly National.”<sup>43</sup> The invitation to “fly” Annie is left ambiguous; although it is understood that the customer will fly on the plane, the stewardess is offered up as a direct representation of the airline for the passenger.

National Airlines reported a 23% increase in passengers during the first year of this campaign, which was nearly twice as much as the broader industry.<sup>44</sup> The company doubled down on the innuendo, launching a campaign where women cooed, “I’m going to fly you like you’ve never been flown before,” coached by the filmmakers to speak as if they were “standing there stark naked.”<sup>45</sup> National Airlines’ competitors followed suit, capitalizing on the financial success that came with eroticizing their staff. Continental Airlines advertised stewardesses who said, “We Really Move our Tails for You,” and Braniff Airlines cheekily asked, “Does your wife know you’re flying with us?”<sup>46</sup> The gendering of the stewardess occupation displayed

<sup>40</sup> “I’ll fly you to Miami daily in luxurious 747 comfort,” *Punch*, July 17, 1974.

<sup>41</sup> “I’m Cheryl. Fly Me,” *Economist*, November 20, 1971.

<sup>42</sup> “I’m Cheryl. Fly Me.”

<sup>43</sup> “I’ll fly you to Miami daily in luxurious 747 comfort.”

<sup>44</sup> “ADVERTISING: Fly Me Again,” *TIME*, June 24, 1974.

<sup>45</sup> “ADVERTISING: Fly Me Again.”

<sup>46</sup> Patty Winter, “Sex Objects in the Sky,” *Marin Women’s Newsletter*, 1974.

remarkable continuities. The carrier-imposed eroticization of the flight attendant staff transitioned from the “ideal brides” of the 1950s and 1960s to the more explicit sexpot stewardess of the 1970s, mirroring the sexual liberation movement’s impact on constructions of female sexuality.

The airline hostesses were directly elided with the airline carriers themselves, and the invitation to “fly” these attractive women carried a commercially successful allure of sexual promise. The eroticization of the stewardess was taken to the next level, marketing them as individuals who offered “care work” that extended far beyond making beds or delivering meals. Laborers were transformed into sex objects through an organized marketing tactic by the airline carriers they worked for. Eastern Air Lines even went so far as to give its passengers “little black books” to collect stewardesses’ numbers.<sup>47</sup> Put simply by David Melancon, a former director of communications for the Association of Flight Attendants, “Flight attendants are probably the only group that [was] ever formally sexually harassed by the company.”<sup>48</sup> Sandra Jarrell Ashworth, a founding member of the activist organization Stewardesses for Women’s Rights, understood that the airlines were creating a derogatory image of their staff. “The airlines gear you into being a sex object. They brainwash you into accepting it and expecting it . . . People don’t consider you a professional, so you don’t think of yourself as one.”<sup>49</sup> The commercialization of the sexualized flight attendant had a strong toll on the women who worked as stewardesses. The emotional and bodily management of the stewardesses, combined with the depiction of the laborers in advertisements, redefined the stewardesses’ perceptions of themselves.

Reading these two instances together illustrates a rich image of the “growing pains” of deregulation and occupational reshaping. In 1977, just six years after the airlines began to integrate, 90% of laborers were women. The other 10%, the stewards, were curiously absent from the advertising that was pumped out to sell more seats. Care work, eroticization, and commercialization remained fundamental characteristics of the industry. During the transitional period of the 1960s and 1970s, airline carriers found that explicitly sexualizing their female cabin crew and implying a certain level of “care work” that passed into the intimate was commercially profitable.

As the regulations for entrance into and embodiment of the position dropped, height, weight, race, age, marital status, and gender were no longer the explicit factors that shaped the workforce. Given these broader criteria, who was selected to perform the occupation? How did airlines reform their marketing of the position and the airlines?

### ***Part Three: The Unrestricted Airline Hostess Industry (1980s-2000s)***

No more “I’m Cheryl. Fly me.” No more hot pants. Say goodbye to stewardesses and hello to . . . THE FLIGHT ATTENDANTS.

—Diane Tedeschi, *Air and Space Magazine*

The 1980s were marked by a distinct shift in language, which portrayed the working world without discrimination by sex. The U.S. Department of Labor’s Manpower Administration issued a 363-page manual that listed job title revisions for the Dictionary of Occupational Titles. The document listed “steward, stewardess” as a “Sexist Title,” instructing users to replace the term with the “Neutral Title” of “flight

<sup>47</sup> Aimee Lee Ball, “The colorful history of the stewardess,” *CNN*, January 24, 2011.

<sup>48</sup> Diane Tedeschi, “The Flight Attendants,” *Air and Space Magazine*, April 1993.

<sup>49</sup> “‘Coffee, Tea, or Me’—Airlines Sold Employees to Sell Flights,” *Association of Flight Attendants-CWA*, April 22, 2022.

attendant.”<sup>50</sup> Feminine endings, the directory contended, such as “ette” or “esse” often implied something smaller, inferior, or less important, necessitating an elimination of the gendered terms and a single title for both sexes.<sup>51</sup>

The flight attendant occupation was now advertised to people of all backgrounds. For example, a 1984 ad called “Discover the Airlines” announced four free upcoming seminars for flight attendant job seekers.<sup>52</sup> This advertisement was notable for its lack of physical qualifications, such as gender, race, or age, in its call for applications. Despite this openness to any and every qualified individual to participate in the industry, the flight attendant occupation remained a primarily female and white space, with the most substantial impact being the extension of the white woman’s ability to turn her job into a career.

In 1993, *Air and Space Magazine* released a volume that encapsulated the industry’s slow move towards progress, writing, “No more ‘I’m Cheryl. Fly me.’” No more hot pants. Say goodbye to stewardesses and hello to...THE FLIGHT ATTENDANTS.”<sup>53</sup> Despite the magazine’s emphasis on progress, it acknowledged that the industry still managed and standardized its workforce. The *Air and Space Magazine* covered the graduation of 38 students from United Airlines’ rigorous training program, writing that “The sound of dozens of black pumps clip-clopping across the floor announced the arrival of the graduating students.”<sup>54</sup> The gender breakdown of the graduates—3 men and 35 women—was reflective of the imbalance throughout the industry. Even two decades after gender integration, the industry was primarily feminized and regarded as pink-collar work. The article continued to describe the graduates, writing, “The women—most of them slim, white, and young—wore navy blue blazers and below-the-knee skirts. All the women sported full makeup and wore light-colored hosiery, and those with long hair had it pulled back into the regulation ponytail.”<sup>55</sup> The uniform itself—light-colored hosiery—showcased an industry that primarily prized white or light-skinned women as commercially attractive. Although the magazine acknowledged that men were also graduating and entering the workforce, the introduction of the workforce through the sound of “black pumps clip-clopping” represented a heavily feminized industry. The industry remained limited to white women; in 1980, 82.6% of the population identified as white, with 7% of the workforce identifying as male and 8.5% of the workforce identifying as black.

The experiences of black women in the flight attendant industry illustrated the racialized aspects of the industry in the unrestricted era. Black women needed to conform to white standards of appearance management if they wanted to be employable; most airlines did not allow employees to wear their hair in “Afro-centric styles.”<sup>56</sup> As recalled by longtime Delta flight attendant Casey Grant, “Many people don’t realize that we endured overtly racist treatment,” citing pilots who flaunted rules such as “no niggers, no night riders (blacks) and no gays in the cockpit.”<sup>57</sup> Discriminatory treatment interfered with the duties of the flight attendants, who were

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<sup>50</sup> “What to say instead,” *New Directions for Women*, 1979.

<sup>51</sup> “What to say instead.”

<sup>52</sup> “Discover the Airlines,” *Bay Area Reporter*, November 8, 1984.

<sup>53</sup> Tedeschi, “The Flight Attendants.”

<sup>54</sup> Tedeschi, “The Flight Attendants.”

<sup>55</sup> Tedeschi, “The Flight Attendants,” 61.

<sup>56</sup> “Casey Grant, among first black flight attendants, pushes for more representation in aviation,” *ABC7Chicago*, February 16, 2024.

<sup>57</sup> Chandra Whitfield, “Fly Girls: One of the First Black Flight Attendants Tells All,” *NBC News*, March 23, 2016.

required to serve food and water to the pilots.<sup>58</sup> The racialized and gendered nature of the flight attendant constructed it as a white, feminine occupation, which substantiated a callous discrimination against populations who did not fit, such as black women and gay men. These barriers made it so that non-white and non-female flight attendants often had difficulty in performing the care work, such as serving food, that comprised much of their job. Women of color were selectively allowed to enter the profession but needed to perform extra bodily management to conform to dominant ideals of whiteness and were continually punished for their non-white identities through discriminatory practices.

By the 1980s, most airlines had been forced to drop the regulations requiring their stewardesses to be young, single, white women, yet maintained a strict emphasis on managing appearance. Up through 1990, American Airlines' policy stated that a "firm, trim silhouette, free of bulges, rolls or paunches, is necessary for an alert, efficient image."<sup>59</sup> Supervisors across airlines were still allowed to monitor the body size and appearance of flight attendants and could fire flight attendants for gaining weight. Flight attendants in the unrestricted era argued that "weight standards discriminate on the basis of sex, because they are only applied to flight attendants, a job category which is 85 percent female, and not to pilots or customer service agents."<sup>60</sup> Moreover, activists argued that the weight tables were sexist because the maximum weight allowed for men was based on the "large" frame, while women was based on the "medium" frame. Cheryle Leon, the president of a prominent flight attendant union, said that the weight tables "played on the old image of 'stewardesses' and the 'fly-me, sky-girl stereotype,'" arguing that "there is no reason weight should be a criterion for doing your job."<sup>61</sup> Most flight attendants saw the weight requirements as a throwback to the era when they were "stewardesses" and could get fired for turning 32 or getting married.<sup>62</sup>

In addition to placing more stringent physical burdens on women than men, the weight regulations were more strictly enforced against women over 40 and those returning from pregnancy, forms of discrimination that worked to keep the workforce "young" and "attractive." Sheri Cappello, an American flight attendant who was fired on the same day as she received her 25-year service pin, said that older flight attendants were given "one chance" to lose weight, while others were given "three chances."<sup>63</sup> Flight attendants returning from maternity leave had to weigh in before being assigned to a flight, and if they were found overweight, they had to lose 1.5 lbs per week and fit the standard by 20 weeks.<sup>64</sup> If they failed to do so, they would be discharged. Flight attendants were expected to lose weight independently, and many laborers developed eating disorders in their attempts to remain employed.

The removal of these weight restrictions obliterated the last major hurdle that flight attendants faced when turning their jobs into careers. In 1980, 78% of flight attendants were younger than 35, while in 2007, only 21% of flight attendants were younger than 35. The median age of the flight attendant shot up from 30 in 1980 to 34

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<sup>58</sup> Whitfield, "Fly Girls: One of the First Black Flight Attendants Tells All."

<sup>59</sup> Mary Ann Galante, "American Airlines hit by age, sex bias suit." *UPI*, April 9, 1990.

<sup>60</sup> Tamar Lewin, "USAir Agrees to Lift Rules On the Weight Of Attendants," *New York Times*, April 8, 1994.

<sup>61</sup> "Flight Attendants Win Fight Over Weight Rules," *Chicago Tribune*, March 13, 1991.

<sup>62</sup> Lewin, "USAir Agrees to Lift Rules On the Weight Of Attendants."

<sup>63</sup> Mary Ann Galante, "American Airlines hit by age, sex bias suit," *UPI*, April 9, 1990.

<sup>64</sup> "Flight Attendants Win Fight Over Weight Rules."

in 1990, reaching 44 in 2007.<sup>65</sup> Although the average age of the flight attendant increased in the unrestricted era, the industry remained primarily comprised of white women. From 1980 to 2007, the demographics of the flight attendant industry went from 82.7% white to 70% white. In nearly three decades, the number of non-white people rose by only 12%.<sup>66</sup> The imbalance in demographics, shown by the fact that the industry remained primarily white and female through the 2000s, illustrates that the cultural baggage of the “stewardess” continued to influence the field.

The removal of restrictions did not fundamentally reshape the industry. The occupation of the flight attendant remained a white, feminine space. Eliminating weight, marriage, and age restrictions extended the lifespan of the white female flight attendant workforce. This meant that there was less turnover in the industry, and therefore, less space for minority populations to enter. Although the industry was theoretically open to anybody joining, the unrestricted era remained a racialized and gendered space. An examination of the experiences of non-white and non-female laborers can provide deeper insights into how the fundamental organizing principles of care work, eroticization, and commodification shifted with the removal of regulations.

The introduction of men into the sector catalyzed a change in the perception of the care work performed by flight attendants. Flight attendant work remained feminized, but the occupation shifted away from the domestic work of the unrestricted occupation and began to emphasize the role of flight attendants as safety professionals. After *Diaz v. Pan Am* ruled that sex was not a bona fide occupational qualification and men began to work as flight attendants, there were no established guidelines or cultural norms for understanding or addressing the role of the male flight attendant. The lack of standardized language—whether professional or public—around the male flight attendant left room for perceptions that ranged from masculinization to feminization of their role.

In many regards, the male flight attendant was queered in the public eye. The “gay male flight attendant” was a widespread phenomenon, built on the larger assumptions that emasculated men were performing the stereotypically “women’s work” of the flight attendant.<sup>67</sup> The enduring stereotype of male flight attendants as “gay and promiscuous” was frequently thrown at laborers by passengers and reinforced by representations in popular culture.<sup>68</sup> In the 1990s, renowned comedian Tracey Ullman had a recurring act as a “gay male flight attendant” on her television series.<sup>69</sup> Similarly, TV shows like *Survivor* featured characters such as “gay flight attendant Todd,” while *The Crew* included a character named Paul Steadman, a warm-hearted flight attendant “who dreams of finding love and settling down—if only he could find the right man.”<sup>70</sup> The perception of male flight attendants as queer was

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<sup>65</sup> “The Changing Demography of U.S. Flight Attendants,” *Population Reference Bureau*, June 3, 2009.

<sup>66</sup> “The Changing Demography of U.S. Flight Attendants.”

<sup>67</sup> For a rich and fascinating history of the male flight attendant, please turn to Phil Tiemeyer’s *Plane Queer*.

<sup>68</sup> S. Johnson, “We should applaud companies like American Airlines that carry out swift corrective action to those selecting few discriminating within its family,” *Gay and Lesbian Times*, May 20, 1993.

<sup>69</sup> Paige Turner, “An Otherwise Uninspired Emmy Telecast Was Made More Interesting by the Presence of the Ever-Amusing Ellen DeGeneres,” *Outlines: The Voice of the Gay and Lesbian Community*, 1997.

<sup>70</sup> “TV what’s on,” *Gay and Lesbian Times*, November 21, 2007; Keith Clark, “Getting a Life on Television,” *Gay and Lesbian Times*, September 21, 1995.

widespread and resulted in male laborers being subjected to homophobic incidents while working.<sup>71</sup> Regardless of their sexual identity, many male flight attendants were queered in the eyes of the public.

Simultaneously, male flight attendants were masculinized. As opined by queer writer Sally Sheklow, “The straight men who work in this swishy professional always act extra macho to defy the stereotype.”<sup>72</sup> Marvin Scott, a flight attendant at Delta, exemplified this masculinization. A Smithsonian article written about Scott showcased his knowledge of safety regulations and integral work in preparing the airplane for takeoff, describing him as “head waiter, head nurse, maitre d’ and public relations director.”<sup>73</sup> Although industries such as waitressing and nursing incorporated a high amount of stereotypically feminine care work, Scott was written as the “head” or the “director.” The male flight attendant was masculinized through this description, granted authority and ownership over his work in the cabin. Reading these characteristics against the 1946 roles of the stewardess, “chef, guide, patient listener—and governess,”<sup>74</sup> clearly illustrates a gendered discrepancy in the depiction of care work. The Smithsonian also stressed his manliness through his physicality, noting his ability to help a woman “lift a bulky carry-on bag in the overhead rack,” and presentation, highlighting his “conservative Delta tie—red background with blue crests.”<sup>75</sup> Scott’s strength and leadership capabilities characterized the “care work” performed by the male flight attendant. The introduction of men into the workforce facilitated the transition in flight attendant care work from in-flight homemakers to safety professionals.

The case of *Wilson v. Southwest Airlines Co.*, a U.S. employment discrimination lawsuit settled in the 1980s concerning bona fide occupational qualifications, offers a compelling connection between care work and eroticization in the unrestricted era. Southwest Airlines, which began business during the sexual revolution of the 1970s, gained notoriety for branding itself as the “Love Airline” and championing a marketing strategy that eroticized stewardesses by outfitting them in hot pants and go-go boots. The eroticization was commercially successful; the airline reported a profit of \$28 million in 1980. Gregory Wilson, alongside over 100 male job applicants, argued that Southwest’s height and weight requirements and refusal to hire men disproportionately excluded male applicants and violated Title XI. Southwest pointed to its advertising and financial success, arguing that female employees were integral to its business. Justice Patrick Higgenbotham ruled that an employer’s choice to “exploit female sensuality as a marketing tool” was no reason for an exemption from the Civil Rights Act, adding that “Southwest’s primary function is to transport passengers safely.”<sup>76</sup> The legal denunciation of the eroticized female stewardess marked a turning point, establishing that airlines could no longer refuse to hire men or explicitly sexualize their staff for a profit.

After *Wilson v. Southwest*, the unrestricted flight occupation saw less carrier-created eroticization of the flight attendants. Airlines were no longer running ads that

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<sup>71</sup> “Man pleads guilty to calling flight attendant ‘demonic homosexual,’” *Gay and Lesbian Times*, July 26, 2001.

<sup>72</sup> Sally Sheklow, “How to Make Your Connection in the Friendly Skies,” *Update*, June 3, 2004.

<sup>73</sup> Bob Reiss, “Under That Smiling, Calm Exterior Is a Graduate Deltoid,” *Smithsonian*, February 1994, 89.

<sup>74</sup> Knowles, “Hostess in the Sky.”

<sup>75</sup> Bob Reiss, “Under That Smiling, Calm Exterior Is a Graduate Deltoid,” *Smithsonian*, February 1994, 89.

<sup>76</sup> “‘Love Airlines’ Must Hire Males,” *Update*, July 24, 1981.

encouraged passengers to flirt with flight attendants, passing out little black books to collect their numbers, or dressing their staff in hot pants. John Rocha, the designer of Virgin Atlantic's uniform, noted that "Since the mid-1980s there has been a shift back to more uniform-like uniform, highlighting professionalism over pure fashion."<sup>77</sup> However, flight attendants were still regarded as "beautiful and sexy ornaments,"<sup>78</sup> strongly associated with the cultural baggage of glamour and femininity. Patti Roberts Smith, a flight attendant who worked in the 1980s, wrote that the gendered aspects of the occupation meant that she was exposed to a "wonderful sampling of sexist behavior."<sup>79</sup> In many ways, the image of the flight attendant remained tied to the glamorized, sexpot stewardess.

In the unrestricted era, the eroticization of flight attendants shifted from being explicitly manufactured by airlines to one reproduced by customer expectations. While airlines largely ceased eroticizing their flight attendant staff, the image of the flight attendant remained mostly unchanged, with many flight attendants attributing the "cultural baggage" of the stewardess to the sustained sexual violence experienced by flight attendants.<sup>80</sup> Sexual harassment from passengers was so prevalent that flight attendant training schools taught specific techniques to reject unwanted advances. As recalled by TWA flight attendant Ann Hood, "We were also taught how to politely brush off passes from male passengers—even though we were also taught to perch on the arms of first-class seats. Techniques varied from a flirty "'Don't be naughty!' to a 'What would your wife say?' Anything was OK, as long as we said it with a smile."<sup>81</sup> Laborers were taught to "smile" for their passengers, and "perch" for their first-class passengers, which implied displaying increasing levels of sexual appeal in a corresponding manner to capital commitment. Flight attendants were instructed to handle harassment by using playful, flirty language to gently reprimand their harassers, a tactic designed to protect the passengers' egos. Airlines continued to train flight attendants to embody an eroticized image. To perform their jobs, laborers needed to perform emotional care work, for sex was still implicitly used as a selling point for airlines. Sara Nelson, the President of the Association of Flight Attendants, argued that "flight attendants have had to face being defined as sex objects on the job," a lasting stereotype that has led to rampant sexual harassment.<sup>82</sup> For flight attendants in the unrestricted era, sexual harassment is "pervasive, it's every day, in one way or another we see it or experience it."<sup>83</sup> Although corporate airline carriers no longer sponsored or commodified the eroticization of the flight attendants, laborers were still subjected to lived and experienced sexual violence.

The shift from explicit, carrier-created eroticization of the flight attendant to the internally experienced sexual harassment of the flight attendant mirrors the shift in commercialization. Although airline carriers no longer centered their flight attendants in advertisements, cabin crews remained a central factor in differentiating airlines. For example, a 1987 American Airlines ad highlighted the 200 destinations

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<sup>77</sup> "Cabin Fever."

<sup>78</sup> Jacopo Prisco, "Confessions of a 1980s flight attendant," *CNN*, June 9, 2022.

<sup>79</sup> Patti Roberts Smith, "High flier," *New Directions for Women*, 1982.

<sup>80</sup> An examination of created or sustained sexual harassment from the 20th to the 21st century must be read with an understanding that language and theoretical development of sexual violence were strongly developed across time.

<sup>81</sup> Ann Hood, *Fly Girl: A Memoir* (W.W. Norton, May 3, 2022), 169–170.

<sup>82</sup> "'It's pervasive, it's every day'—How a history of sexism in the airline industry echoes today," *PBS NewsHour*, February 11, 2018.

<sup>83</sup> "'It's pervasive, it's every day'—How a history of sexism in the airline industry echoes today."

it could fly its travelers to, and its status as the “‘Best Airline in America’ by frequent flying business travelers in survey after survey.”<sup>84</sup> Although the cabin crew was notably absent from the advertisement, the airline did highlight “the service and special qualities that set us apart from the rest.”<sup>85</sup> Flight attendants were no longer explicitly commercialized and elided with the airlines, but the idea that the flight attendant was the airline’s best sales asset remained. Victoria Pryor, a former United manager of in-flight services training, acknowledged that 24% of passenger choice was influenced by their in-flight experience, something that the flight attendants themselves shape.<sup>86</sup> The flight attendants believed that they were responsible for representing the face of the airline and humanizing the experience for their passengers. Maria Miller, a flight attendant who worked at United, said that her job was, first and foremost, to sell a product and gain repeat business.<sup>87</sup> Laborers were under immense pressure to provide a homogenized and appealing experience for their passengers, which often meant continuing to conform to expectations that were the remnants of regulation.

### *Conclusion*

The airline industry used the criteria of age, race, gender, height, weight, and marital status to restrict the stewardess workforce to young, conventionally attractive white women. The care work and eroticization embodied by stewardesses followed the dominant ideals of white, middle-class femininity, creating the perception of the stewardess as the sexually attractive homemaker, or the “ideal bride.” During the removal of restrictions in the 1960s and 1970s, the industry remained resistant to change. The very year that men were allowed to re-enter the profession was the same one that airlines began to double down on the sexy, servile stewardess. The process of fighting for gender and racial integration and for removing the restrictions that kept the workforce young and unmarried was long, and the fundamental ideas of care work, eroticization, and commodification remained present.

Ultimately, the removal of the restrictions was unsuccessful, as it caused only surface-level change. Although the industry was theoretically open to participation from all populations, it remained primarily composed of white women. Men, queer people, and people of color found themselves in racialized and gendered categories in which they did not fit and reshaped the care work expected of the occupation from domestic to professional. Flight attendants were continually eroticized in their profession, subjected to widespread harassment shaped by the lasting cultural conception of the stewardess. Although flight attendants were no longer trained to “be” the airline, they were continually viewed as an integral sales medium. Care work, eroticization, and commodification continued to affect the industry in radicalized and gendered ways even after the removal of the enforced industry standards on the laborers.

The airline industry is a fascinating microcosm of the larger tensions of inclusion and exclusion within the cultural domain of the United States. When an industry is so heavily restricted, change towards inclusion has to come from the bottom up. The removal of restrictions was only a surface-level change; the cultural and commercial baggage of the stewardess kept the industry primarily filled with white women.

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<sup>84</sup> “American Airlines,” *The Economist*, June 6, 1987.

<sup>85</sup> “American Airlines.”

<sup>86</sup> Tedeschi, “The Flight Attendants,” 61.

<sup>87</sup> Tedeschi, “The Flight Attendants,” 61.

This paper pushes against the model of progress that might imply a hard-fought, hard-won, steady march towards inclusion within the industry. Stewardesses and flight attendants alike were tasked with performing care work for their passengers, which was only accomplished through rigorous emotional and physical labor and were commercialized by their airlines in advertisements—their eroticized bodies serving as selling points. The enduring legacy of racialization and gendered expectations shaped the stewardess and flight attendant occupation throughout history, showing that genuine progress in dismantling discriminatory practices requires continuous effort, extending far beyond simply eliminating formal restrictions. This research can serve as a foundation for further exploration of the inefficacies of efforts to support diversity and equity. Within this endeavor, there exists further opportunity to examine the cultural histories of other pink-collar occupations. Modeling, for example, often links eroticization and commercialization in a formal sense, whereas waitressing formally links care work and commercialization, with the potential for the deployment of erotic capital for further compensation, often in the form of tips. Understanding the tripartite thematic linkages surrounding the flight attendant industry in the context of other industries might lead to a broader understanding of women’s work in the United States.

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# RATIONALITY IN DEATH: How the Ideologies of the Rational Dress Movement Inspired the Edwardian Decline in Crape in England

Ellory Aldred

“The unfeeling wretch!” These are the words of an early twentieth-century newspaper character who believed his wife was going to avoid wearing mourning clothes upon his death. After a long—and comical—misunderstanding in which the aggrieved husband overhears a conversation between his wife and her dressmaker, the wife dispels her husband’s erroneous belief that she will not be dressed in dull, black mourning crape when he succumbs to his fatal fever. All along, the wife was talking about wearing mourning in honor of a neighbor, while the husband had been given a positive prognosis by his doctor.

<sup>1</sup> While this story, published in London in 1903, is humorous and even ridiculous, it portrays the gravity of following proper mourning etiquette for those who could afford it during the Victorian and Edwardian eras. Just one year later, Mrs. Humphry, an author of etiquette guides for elite members of society, offered new guidelines for mourning that reduced the bereavement period from twenty-four to eighteen months.<sup>2</sup> Comparing the husband’s outrage to Mrs. Humphry’s guidelines begs the question: if mourning dress held such high stakes, why were mourning practices declining in duration and importance?

To understand the debates around mourning dress in this era, it is crucial to identify two key players: crape and the Rational Dress Movement. Crape refers to a specific type of fabric that is dull and black. It was worn during mourning for specific periods of time based on the relationship of the mourner to the deceased.<sup>3</sup> Crape clothing cost consumers significantly more than clothing of everyday fabrics such as silk.<sup>4</sup> Wearing crape represented not only a respect for the deceased, but for widows, it deflected the male gaze following the death of her husband.<sup>5</sup> The utility of crape came under fire in the early 20th century as the Rational Dress Movement grew in popularity. The Rational Dress Movement refers to a social movement in the nineteenth century dedicated to the reform of women’s dress. Advocates of the movement sought to make women’s socially accepted fashion more suitable to everyday life in terms of cost, comfort, and overall health.<sup>6</sup> The Rational Dress Society was originally founded in the 1880s by Lady F.W. Harberton and Mrs. E.M. King, amidst calls from professionals and academics to loosen women’s corsets in the name of health. The women also proposed changes like wearing bifurcated skirts for greater ease of movement.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “Going Into Mourning,” *London Journal*, and *Weekly Record of Literature, Science, and Art*, August 8, 1903.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Humphry, *Etiquette for Every Day* (Alexander Moring Limited, 1904), 415.

<sup>3</sup> Humphry, *Etiquette for Every Day*, 418.

<sup>4</sup> Sarah Scaturro, “‘Penitential and Self-Mortifying:’ Mourning Crape in Fashion.” *Victorian Review* 49, no. 1 (2024): 134.

<sup>5</sup> Scaturro, “‘Penitential and Self-Mortifying,’” 127.

<sup>6</sup> Richard Thompson Ford, *Dress Codes: How the Laws of Fashion Made History* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2021), 126–142.

<sup>7</sup> Christine Bayles Kortsch, *Dress Culture in Late Victorian Women’s Fashion* (Routledge, 2009), 77–78.

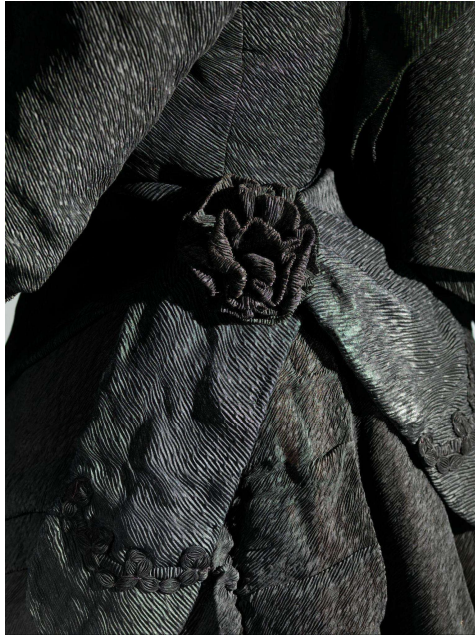


Figure 1: A close-up view of English mourning crape.<sup>8</sup>

Scholars interested in fashion and gender history have examined the historical importance of mourning dress from a variety of perspectives. In their article about the rise and fall of Frederic Forster’s Mourning Warehouse in Leeds, fashion scholar Kevin Almond and mourning expert Judith Simpson argue that elaborate mourning practices began falling out of fashion before the Great War due to high costs of crape.<sup>9</sup> Likewise, Lucy Whitmore acknowledges in “A Matter of Individual Opinion and Feeling” that the practice was in decline leading up to the conflict.<sup>10</sup> In her work on the materiality of crape, Sarah Scarutto moved beyond historical context to consider materials used in mourning wear. She asserted that crape was toxic and that it had many negative side effects to the wearer, which were well-known and disliked by the women who wore the garments.<sup>11</sup> Also interested in crape, fashion scholar Lou Taylor argues that the Rational Dress Movement condemned the high price of crape in her book *Mourning Dress*.<sup>12</sup> According to law scholar Richard Thompson Ford, the Rational Dress Movement focused not only on the financial burden of fashion rules, but also on how fashion negatively impacted women’s mobility and overall health.<sup>13</sup>

This paper contributes to the scholarship above by investigating the Rational Dress Movement and the decline of mourning wear in turn-of-the-century England. Building on Scarutto and Taylor’s work on the health and financial burdens of mourning dress and crape on its female wearers, as well as on scholarship that links the decline of mourning to the Great War, my paper argues that the shift in perception of clothing following the Rational Dress Movement significantly contributed to the

<sup>8</sup> *Mourning Ensemble, 1870–1872*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

<sup>9</sup> Kevin Almond and Judith Simpson, “The Decline of Female Mourning Wear: A Case Study Analysis of Frederic Forster’s Mourning Warehouse 1849–1923 in Leeds, UK,” *Costume* 57, no. 2 (2023): 225.

<sup>10</sup> Lucy Whitmore, “A Matter of Individual Opinion and Feeling,” in *British Women’s Histories of the First World War*, ed. by Maggie Andrews, Alison Fell, Lucy Noakes, and June Purvis (Routledge, 2020), 68.

<sup>11</sup> Scarutto, “Penitential and Self-Mortifying,” 143.

<sup>12</sup> Lou Taylor, *Mourning Dress: A Costume and Social History* (Routledge, 2009), 153.

<sup>13</sup> Richard Thompson Ford, *Dress Codes*, 126–142.

decline in crape mourning wear. Specifically, I examine how mourning dress became a financial burden, health hazard, and impediment to mobility for women. Analyzing the shared language and ideologies between the Rational Dress Movement and the decline in mourning dress of the Edwardian period, this paper demonstrates the Rational Dress Movement's impact on the decline of crape. Society handbooks, newspaper articles, and ladies' periodicals detailed the changing expectations of proper mourning that society women should be following at the time. These sources speculated why these shifts occurred while advertisements for crape provided insight into crape's impact on women's health and the fabric's fragility. Comparing these sources with Rational Dress Movement articles and gazettes illuminates the similarities in both content and concern. The major pillars of the Rational Dress Movement—affordability, physical health, and mobility—reflected Edwardian women's paramount complaints against crape, and the change in women's mindset regarding the role of their clothing prompted by the Rational Dress Movement influenced the decline of crape and mourning dress that occurred in the Edwardian period.

### **The Slow Death of Mourning**

Mourning dress was on the decline before the onset of World War I. Inspired by Queen Victoria in the 1800s, the adoption of mourning dress took hold first among elites but reached the middle classes by the early twentieth century. Dressed exclusively in widow's attire since the death of her husband, Albert, until her passing in 1901, Victoria elevated public mourning and made mourning dress a wardrobe staple for elite women.<sup>14</sup> Lou Taylor described the practice as a "cult" during the Victorian era because it was all-consuming and incredibly strict. She told the story of women having to carry both full and half mourning attire on every trip in case the household they visited suddenly went into mourning.<sup>15</sup> In 1904, Mrs. Humphry outlined proper mourning etiquette for polite individuals. In her guide, she claimed that the adequate mourning period for widows had diminished from twenty-four to eighteen months. Widow's caps, she pointed out, were also "diminishing in size and significance," suggesting that the Edwardian era had ushered in a new era of mourning.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Taylor, *Mourning Dress*, 90.

<sup>15</sup> Taylor, *Mourning Dress*, 90.

<sup>16</sup> Humphry, *Etiquette for Every Day*, 415.



Figure 2: An example of a 20<sup>th</sup> century crape mourning ensemble.<sup>17</sup>

Mourning rules changed frequently across the Edwardian period. Lady Jane’s column “The Weekly Topic,” which ran regularly in the *London Journal*, announced in 1911 that proper mourning was “worn for a far shorter time than would formerly have been considered correct.”<sup>18</sup> By 1912, a *Vogue* article proclaimed that in England, “mourning shall not exceed one year.”<sup>19</sup> Between 1905 and 1912, the proper mourning period decreased from 18 to 12 months. This was a significant change in a culturally accepted practice in a relatively short time frame. The required period for wearing crape trended downward, indicating that the practice was falling out of fashion. The mindset surrounding crape and its popularity had clearly evolved.

Throughout this period, the Rational Dress Society pushed for women’s clothing to reflect individual women’s financial and health needs. Members of the Society authored magazine and periodical articles that proposed a reform of clothing’s function. *Bow Bells*, a monthly magazine that targeted middle- and upper-class women, was especially sympathetic to the movement. In her article “Health, Beauty, and the Toilet” for the magazine, contributor Flora argued that clothing was meant to protect the “health, good sense, and the comfort of the woman of to-day”<sup>20</sup> so that women were comfortable, could breathe fully, and could even ride a bicycle in everyday dress. *The Rational Dress Society Gazette* echoed Flora’s sentiments. The organization protested “against the introduction of any fashion in dress that either deforms the figure, impedes the movements of the body, or in any way tends to injure the health.”<sup>21</sup> Clothing, Rational Dress Movement advocates maintained, should be

<sup>17</sup> *Mourning Ensemble*, 1907, The Museum at FIT.

<sup>18</sup> Lady Jane, “The Weekly Topic,” *London Journal* 1, April 29, 1911.

<sup>19</sup> “Fashion: Meeting the Requirements of Mourning Etiquette and Dress,” *Vogue*, April 15, 1912.

<sup>20</sup> Flora, “Health, Beauty, and the Toilet,” *Bow Bells: A Magazine of General Literature and Art for Family Reading*, January 17, 1896.

<sup>21</sup> *Rational Dress Society’s Gazette*, 1 (July 1888) and 2 (October 1888), in *Clothing, Society and Culture in Nineteenth-Century England*, ed. Clare Rose (Routledge), 239.

less of a burden for women in their daily lives, and should not threaten women's ordinary lives and abilities in any way.

By the beginning of the Edwardian period, the Rational Dress movement had made some important strides in shaping public opinion about the function of women's dress. Already in 1896, Flora questioned whether greater comfort in the waists of dresses could be attributed to bicycles or "whether women have grown more sensible?"<sup>22</sup> Either way, the idea of comfortable and logical dress, specifically in the form of less restrictive stays and bodices, had begun to take hold. In a 1904 article titled "The Progress of Rational Dress," Viscountess Haberton, a leader of the Rational Dress Movement, claimed that the movement was "certainly gaining ground."<sup>23</sup> As the ideas and foundations of the movement caught hold with the general public, especially women, perceptions of dress and fashion began to change. Women saw their clothing in a new light, and previously unbreakable fashion requirements were called into question. As these new ideas about clothing spread, women started to look at crape and mourning gowns in a more critical fashion.

### *Financial Burden*

A critical aspect of crape, its cost, was being called into question by female mourners following the Rational Dress Movement. Crape was expensive compared to regular clothing, and it often did not hold up as well as more common materials. Women were purchasing and repurchasing these expensive items. The high price point and relative fragility of crape made it an irrational investment out of line with the Rational Dress Movement's idea of logical clothing.

The cost of a mourning outfit made of crape was highly expensive, especially compared to the cost of an item not made of crape. The advertisements section of *The Gentlewoman and Modern Life*, a monthly magazine aimed at wealthy women, shows just how stark the price difference was between an item made of crape and a regular clothing item made of silk or chiffon. A crape skirt cost 49 shillings and 6 pence while an everyday skirt from a neighboring advertisement cost just 7 shillings and 6 pence. The full widow's suite being advertised would cost over 900 pounds (or 1200 USD) today, when adjusted for inflation.<sup>24</sup> Such a high price point would have made it nearly impossible for anyone but the wealthiest women to follow correct mourning by having enough crape clothing. When wealthy women started thinking about the rationality of their clothing, spending such a large sum on clothing that was only worn for a prescribed period of time did not fit with the Rational Dress mindset.

Crape's high price point was exacerbated by the material's fragility. In 1899, a newspaper advertisement boasted the benefits of new waterproof crape that was superior to traditional crape because items made from the improved crape were "not injured by dampness and wear."<sup>25</sup> These advertisements prove that companies knew the fragility of their products was causing a decline in business. Crape was expensive already and having to repurchase it because it got wet in the rain seemed frivolous. Waterproof crape was not the answer to these issues, though. The cost of waterproof material was even higher than regular crape. The advertisement states that "the price is not low," but that the product is more robust than crape that was "erstwhile

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<sup>22</sup> Flora, "Health, Beauty, and the Toilet."

<sup>23</sup> "The Progress of Rational Dress," *The Review of Reviews* 30, no. 177 (1904): 292.

<sup>24</sup> "Multiple Classified Advertisements," *The Gentlewoman and Modern Life*, December 14, 1901.

<sup>25</sup> "NEW MOURNING GOWNS: Waterproof Crepes Are Now Worn Exclusively," *Washington Post*, December 17, 1899.

fragile.”<sup>26</sup> Essentially, one could either spend more money on waterproof crape or spend slightly less and have to continuously replace the garment as it is ruined by something as mundane as a puddle. Either way, the expense of crape was a huge burden, and its fragility made it an even more questionable investment.

The cost of crape made a significant dent in the yearly incomes of many Edwardian households. In 1901, the average household income in England was 82 pounds, or just over 8500 pounds today.<sup>27</sup> Purchasing the widow’s suite from the advertisements mentioned above at 49/6 would have cost around ten percent of a family’s yearly income. Female-headed, working-class households made only around 5s. to 13s. a week, or 13 to 34 pounds a year. This would equate to between 1350 and 3500 pounds a year today.<sup>28</sup> Working-class widows, then, would be unable to purchase a full widow’s suite with a whole year’s worth of income. Many women could not afford to spend such funds on a fragile fabric that would not even survive the entirety of the bereavement period. Therefore, the social requirement of crape during mourning was not only illogical, but completely off the table for most women.

The Rational Dress Society overtly disagreed with the extreme financial burden of mourning dress placed on the middle-class household. The group argued that dress reform would “diminish as far as possible the expense of mourning.”<sup>29</sup> This statement proved that the Rational Dress Movement prioritized affordability in clothing. Reformers did not support spending outlandish amounts of money on any one piece of clothing simply because society demanded it. Many widows, the society explained, were thrown into financial crises by the loss of their husband and spending a large amount of money on a mourning dress to satisfy social obligations was difficult to justify. A 1910 newspaper article titled “The Extreme of English Mourning” discussed the burden of buying mourning attire for a family of “moderate means.” The article stated that women in all of England had “donned costumes of woe, whether they could afford it or not.”<sup>30</sup> The movement’s disapproval of high-priced clothing, such as crape, caused women to think differently about society’s mourning requirements. As this idea caught hold, demand for crape decreased greatly, and social rules for mourning reflected the shift in mindset.

### ***Physical Health Concerns***

Crape did not just have a negative impact on a mourner’s purse; mourning ensembles often caused health issues for the woman wearing it. Today, the illness women associated with wearing crape has been corroborated by scientific evidence of its toxicity. In the Victorian and Edwardian eras, though, women perceived crape’s toxicity by the way it made them feel to wear it. The Rational Dress Movement condemned articles of clothing, notably stays, that caused physical damage to the body. Crape’s adverse effect on women’s health contributed to its decline in popularity.

Crape had many well-known, negative side effects to the wearer. The fabric contained toxic chemicals such as arsenic and mercury, which would have caused skin irritation, respiratory issues, and eye irritation.<sup>31</sup> These symptoms would have been

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<sup>26</sup> “NEW MOURNING GOWNS.”

<sup>27</sup> Solomos Solomou and Ryland Thomas, “Updated Estimates of UK GDP from the Income Side, 1841–1920,” *Economic History Review* 76, no. 3 (2023): 712.

<sup>28</sup> Pat Thane, “Women and the Poor Law in Victorian and Edwardian England,” *History Workshop*, no. 6 (1978): 44.

<sup>29</sup> Taylor, *Mourning Dress*, 122.

<sup>30</sup> “The Extreme of English Mourning,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 28, 1910.

<sup>31</sup> Scaturro, “Penitential and Self-Mortifying,” 142.

quite noticeable to the women wearing crape garments. The discovery of these chemicals in crape confirmed what women had already known about the material. It was causing them physical damage, which was in direct conflict with the Rational Dress Movement's idea of clothing's relationship to its wearer. In 1891, just a decade before the start of the Edwardian period, a newspaper article in *Harper's Bazaar* urged women to wear crape dyed with vegetable dyes because it was "not injurious to health."<sup>32</sup> This indicates a couple ideas. First, all other crape must have been injurious to the wearer's health if vegetable dyed crape's primary selling point was being innocuous. There would not be a remedy to a problem that did not exist. Second, women must have been aware that crape was making them unwell or ill if advertisements such as this one were trying to prove that new crape was not hurtful. If no one had noticed that crape was causing health issues, there would have been no reason to advertise new crape manufacturing styles that did not cause health issues. By 1915, just a year post-Edwardian era, a *Vogue* article cited "consideration for health" as an influence on mourning dress and its decline.<sup>33</sup> Women were becoming increasingly aware of the impact their clothing could have on their bodies and physical wellbeing. Wearing clothing that was detrimental to one's health was not rational by any means, and as rationality and wellbeing began to be prioritized, anything in opposition, such as crape, was cycled out.

The Rational Dress Movement spoke out against clothing that caused physical harm to the person wearing it. One of the most prominent examples is the movement's denunciation of tight-laced corsets and stays. Stays, or structured undergarments like corsets, were harmful to women's internal organs, so the Rational Dress Society protested against wearing them. A study done by a doctor in Edinburgh described some of the terrible side effects of tightly laced corsets, such as physical deformities and undue pressure on internal organs.<sup>34</sup> These negative side effects compelled the Rational Dress Society to protest "against the wearing of tightly fitted corsets..." for the sake of women's physical wellbeing.<sup>35</sup> This condemnation of physically detrimental clothing items made women consider whether their clothes should be causing them physical health issues.

### *Limited Mobility*

The physical issues associated with crape were not limited to causing illness. In the late Victorian era into the Edwardian era, aristocratic women were gaining independence outside of the home by riding bicycles. Riding bicycles, along with other physical activities, was coming into fashion. The Rational Dress Movement supported women's participation in these activities, and the movement advocated for fashion trends to better reflect women's mobility outside of the home. Crape's fragile nature made it a less-than-ideal fabric for cycling. The form of the clothing, such as the veils worn over the face, prevented cycling as well. As the Rational Dress Movement prompted women to favor clothing conducive to mobility and physical activity, materials such as crape fell out of fashion for its shortcomings in that area.

Preceding the decline in mourning dress, fashion had been changing to accommodate women's new pastimes such as bicycling. Physical activity for women had been coming into fashion. The article "Athletic Women," published in the *London Journal* in 1895, described how women's forms were becoming more athletic. The

<sup>32</sup> "The Revival of Crape," *Harper's Bazaar*, October 24, 1891.

<sup>33</sup> "Fashion: The Requirements of Correct Mourning," *Vogue*, April 1, 1915.

<sup>34</sup> J.C. Webster, "Some Effects of Tight Lacing on Certain of the Abdominal Contents," *The Hospital* 19, no. 480 (1895): 165–166.

<sup>35</sup> Rose, *Clothing, Society, and Culture*, 239.

author claimed that clothing such as knickerbockers, or a form of baggy, knee-length pants, were advantageous to women's recreational activities while also being flattering.<sup>36</sup> Bicycles became popular quickly because they provided women with a sense of independence. They allowed women to "cover more ground with less fatigue" while gaining an "extensive knowledge of a given district which is otherwise unattainable."<sup>37</sup> Women found freedom outside of the home by riding bicycles and engaging in other physical activities. They desired clothing that would reflect this newfound mobility.

The Rational Dress Movement had a strong interest in women's mobility and freedom to engage in physical activity. An article titled "Rational Dress" described one of the core requirements of human dress as "freedom of movement."<sup>38</sup> The *Rational Dress Society Gazette* condemned any form of dress that "impedes the movements of the body."<sup>39</sup> The movement advocated for the wearing of a divided skirt, which was a petticoat that was bifurcated with a regular skirt over top.<sup>40</sup> These fashion innovations were designed to allow women to engage in physical activity without the impediment of fabric. Any dress that interfered with a woman's mobility was not accepted by the Rational Dress Movement.

Mourning dress and crape were a form of fashion that significantly hindered a woman's ability to ride a bike or be otherwise mobile. As previously discussed, crape was incredibly fragile. It deteriorated rapidly in sunlight and was marked by water spots in rain.<sup>41</sup> A woman dressed in crape could not go outside and expose her crape garment to the elements. Obviously, activities such as bicycle riding required being out of doors, and such a fragile fabric like crape would have prevented a woman from doing so. By keeping a woman trapped indoors, crape was essentially impeding a woman's independence and mobility, a quality of any clothing item that the Rational Dress Movement frowned upon. Crape also ripped quite easily. Pedaling a bicycle includes much friction and interaction between the clothing and the machine. It would be impossible for the thin, delicate crape to endure such repeated movements. A woman could not expect to wear her crape on a bicycling journey and not sustain quite a few rips and tears, making wearing mourning garb on a bicycle out of the question. As the idea of women being physically active outside of the home flourished, any socially enforced dress code hindering their abilities was looked down upon and phased out.

The structure of mourning dress also impaired a woman's ability to ride a bicycle. Mrs. Humphry's *Etiquette for Every Day* called for widows to wear a veil, usually trimmed with black crape, that covers the eyes.<sup>42</sup> It is easy to see how a veil covering the eyes would impede a woman's ability to ride a bike, as it would be dangerous to ride a bicycle without being able to see where she was going. This structural issue associated with mourning dress contributed to women's decreased mobility while wearing socially required mourning dress. Mourning garments were also long and did not feature divided petticoats. "Cycling for Women" called for the

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<sup>36</sup> "Athletic Women," *London Journal, and Weekly Record of Literature, Science, and Art*, January 1, 1895.

<sup>37</sup> Lady Jeune, "Cycling for Women," *The Badminton Magazine of Sports and Pastimes*, October 1895.

<sup>38</sup> "Rational Dress," *British Architect*, May 25, 1883.

<sup>39</sup> Rose, *Clothing, Society, and Culture*, 239.

<sup>40</sup> Rose, *Clothing, Society, and Culture*, 246.

<sup>41</sup> Scaturro, "Penitential and Self-Mortifying," 137.

<sup>42</sup> Humphry, *Etiquette for Every Day*, 416.

dress to be “sufficiently short” to allow movement of the feet.<sup>43</sup> Mourning dress did not boast this feature. Members of the Rational Dress Movement questioned any fashion trend or requirement that prevented a woman from being independent and mobile. Therefore, crape and mourning attire such as a crape veil, began to be viewed more negatively.

### *Conclusion*

The Rational Dress Movement’s attention to affordability, mobility, and health altered the way society, and most importantly women, looked at their clothing. Crape, which was all-around impractical, began to fall out of fashion during the Edwardian era. Its fragility contributed to its financial burden, as well as to its limiting power on women’s mobility. Additionally, its known toxicity was damaging to the physical health of any woman wearing the fabric. These traits were in direct conflict with the Rational Dress Movement’s perception of clothing. As women’s understanding of and relationship to their clothing evolved according to these new ideas, mourning dress, especially with crape, began to decline.

This paper analyzed the cause of a trend that had been previously exclusively identified. Much attention had been paid to the role of the Great War on mourning dress and habits, but the decline in mourning dress preceding the conflict was equally important because of its impact on a long-held cultural tradition. This paper also built upon prior scholarship into the financial burden of crape as well as the toxic materiality of crape. Its conclusions drew new connections between the Rational Dress Movement and the decline in crape occurring during the Edwardian period. The investigation of fashion history, particularly with an emphasis on women, provides historians with new ways of analyzing the role of women in society. The rise of the Rational Dress Movement, and its subsequent impact on the feminine trend of wearing crape, illustrates an increasing focus on the impact of women’s clothes on their bodies, finances, and mobility.

This argument could be extended to explore connections between women’s rights movements and their impact on women’s fashion. The mobility aspect of crape’s decline could be connected to women’s interest in taking on roles and activities outside of the home. If women were declining their use of crape for mobility purposes, this shift could have correlated with an increase in suffragette movements. This argument’s connections to British economics could also be further investigated. Women’s fashion being dictated by affordability as opposed to tradition could indicate a shift in the financial status of middle-class and aristocratic homes. Additionally, the decline of crape would have an impact on the economic health of the fashion industry and fabric manufacturers.

Moving forward, there is ample opportunity to investigate all three of the themes explored above more extensively. Affordability, mobility, and health could be analyzed in further depth to discuss the extent to which each theme impacted the decline in crape without the influence of the other two. A more comprehensive access to the periodicals and journals associated with the movement could likely turn up more links between the Rational Dress Movement and the decline in crape. Both movements signified a major shift in social perceptions of fashion and acceptable behaviors for women and deserve more academic attention.

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<sup>43</sup> “Cycling for Women,” *Review of Reviews*, May 1893.

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## TWO SIDES TO THE CONVERSATION: Quaker Colonists and Lenape Relations, 1680–1730

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When governments across Europe began contracting out land and colonizing the “New World,” there was a race to create communities in which people felt that they were able to build better lives for themselves and their families than they could overseas, where land had long been sold out and passed down for generations and generations, and the aristocracy and monarchy almost fully controlled the government. While the newly discovered continent was vast, nations were eager to be the first to find resources such as gold and spices, causing them to grant charters to groups that were willing to start a new community and investigate the land. Eagerness for an attempt at religious utopia, plentiful economic opportunities, or more democratic forms of government led many to immigrate to North America.<sup>1</sup> However, questions arose over whether not only the different European cultures could coexist on the newly discovered land, but also how the people who were native to the continent would factor in. This “New World” was not just a land of resources and promise. It was already home to many different nations of people. Robert F. Berkhofer Jr., a historian who studied Native Americans for decades, estimated there were about two thousand separate societies in the Americas.<sup>2</sup> Much as the British and the French were different, these societies were also different and diverse, and many did not even know about each other’s existence. With all of the separate cultures and societies came different daily routines, worldviews, and systems. Europeans often saw the Native ways of life as primitive, as they did not believe that their way of doing things was as advanced as European methods, regardless of results.<sup>3</sup> Native societies were advanced in many ways, including governments, languages, and agriculture, but because they were different from European styles, they were often seen as much less advanced. European attempts to “civilize” the Natives led to rocky relationships between the colonies of European settlers and nearby Native tribes. However, when Quakers arrived in Pennsylvania in 1681 to carry out William Penn’s “holy experiment,” the relationship with the nearby Lenape people fell somewhere between peaceful coexistence and a strong friendship.<sup>4</sup> The Quaker and Lenape peoples’ similar temperaments and ideals provided a unique situation in which both groups mutually respected one another but were content to let the other function on their own. This

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<sup>1</sup> While Europeans in North America were still subject to their monarchs at this time, local governments could be more inclusive. Some colonies, including the Quakers, utilized strategies such as town meetings. Though this usually only applied to white, male landowners, it was a small step towards progress. It allowed people who previously had little say in their government to have a voice.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Berkhofer Jr., *The White Man’s Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2011).

<sup>3</sup> While this paper will only refer to the Native people using some form of Native, Indigenous, or a particular tribe name, many primary sources and older secondary sources refer to them as “Indians,” an outdated term rooted in oppression and colonization. While I acknowledge that this is not the preferred term and can be considered offensive, it is impossible to find older sources that do not refer to them by this name, and changing the wording of the quote would destroy an important window into the European view of Native Americans during colonial times.

<sup>4</sup> “Lenape” translates to human beings.

proves that coexistence between Native American governments and the United States can be achieved.

Historically, scholars have mainly focused on the Quaker religion and how its tenets contributed to their thriving relations with the Lenape tribe. While the Quaker religious beliefs played an important role, they were not the only factor. Had the Quakers attempted to form their colony near a different or more war-oriented Native tribe, Quaker and Native relations upon settlement could have looked entirely different. Other factors about the Quakers, as well as the Lenape officials' peaceful and giving nature, also contributed to the somewhat strange friendliness of the two groups at the end of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth century. The Quaker and Lenape relationship is one of the best examples of the "humanity" that Nancy Shoemaker points out as the common thread between Natives and Europeans.<sup>5</sup> It is difficult to find sources that tell us how the Lenape people contributed to this relationship, leading to them often being seen as bystanders to the Quakers' quirky religious sect. However, we can see some Lenape viewpoints through their recorded interactions with the Quakers. The Lenape people, although leaving a quieter footprint, were just as involved in setting the boundaries of their relationship as the Quakers.

### Early Quaker Beliefs

Quakerism originated between 1647 and 1650 from the preachings of Reverend George Fox.<sup>6</sup> Its main feature was the idea of an "in-dwelling of Christ."<sup>7</sup> Quakers believed that people were all inherently good, and there was a "light" within every person that one needed to let shine. They were anti-cleric, anti-tithe, or giving part of their income to the church, and anti-hierarchy. In general, Quakers presented a certain skepticism towards many common social arrangements, such as speaking out of turn. This attitude led to a less judgmental view of the Lenape people than that of a group like the Puritans, who supported ideas such as clericalism and hierarchy. While the Quakers were not always perfectly fair in their treatment of the Lenape people and were certainly guilty of putting white people's economic interests above others' rights, nothing about their rhetoric suggests that they did not respect the Lenape people or view them as "savage."<sup>8</sup> They still saw themselves as above the Lenape, and by the end of the eighteenth century, referred to the Lenape lifestyle as "poor and on the verge of community collapse."<sup>9</sup> The slights made towards the Natives in this early era of Pennsylvania were likely not a result of purposeful hate, but internal bias and a Eurocentric mindset. Early Quaker law in Pennsylvania aimed to reject and prevent the mistreatment of the Lenape people, as well as other Indigenous people who entered

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<sup>5</sup> Nancy Shoemaker, *A Strange Likeness: Becoming Red and White in Eighteenth-Century North America* (Oxford University Press, 2004), 3.

<sup>6</sup> Although the term "Quaker" was not used at the time and they referred to themselves as the "Society of Friends," this paper uses the term Quaker to describe the Christian denomination based on the teachings of George Fox due to its modern association with the movement.

<sup>7</sup> Jordan Penney, "Change and Continuity in Restoration Quakerism, 1660–1700" (master's thesis, Dalhousie University, 2005), 2, Library and Archives Canada (245555465).

<sup>8</sup> Definition from the Oxford English Dictionary beginning in 1473: "Of a person: living in a wild state; belonging to a people regarded as primitive and uncivilized. Of a tribe, society, region, etc.: consisting or composed of people regarded as primitive and uncivilized." The term was often used by Europeans to describe the Indigenous people residing in the Americas.

<sup>9</sup> Kari Thompson, "Inconsistent Friends: Philadelphia Quakers and the Development of Native American Missions in the Long Eighteenth Century" (PhD diss., University of Iowa, 2013), 1, Iowa Research Online (9983777382302771).

the colony.

While Quakers tried to prevent mistreatment in their new laws, they also attempted to form something else—their religious identity. At the time of Pennsylvania’s settlement, Quakerism was still very new. Pacifism is often the first characteristic associated with Quakerism. However, Fox himself did not condemn violence until 1660, and it took some time for it to catch on amongst his followers. Most Quakers tried to make peace with surrounding communities before the movement officially embraced pacifism, though, even if they would not necessarily have identified with the label.<sup>10</sup>

### *The Lenapes’ Old World*

The Native people most closely associated with the Quakers in Pennsylvania are the Lenni Lenape tribe, also known simply as the Lenape or the Delaware Indians. While the Quakers had dealings with a few other tribes, including the Susquehannocks and the Iroquois, by the time of Quaker settlement in the area, the Lenape had won control of the area. They were a mostly sedentary tribe and did not have a written language, although William Penn describes their spoken language as “lofty yet narrow, but like in Hebrew, in signification full.”<sup>11</sup>

They would have spoken a language called Unami. A modern Lenape woman, Shelley DePaul, describes her experience learning the language as “know[ing] that words have power, especially the ancient ones.”<sup>12</sup> They had met and made deals and trade agreements with Europeans before, as the Dutch, Swedes, and Finns settled the area in 1624, decades before the Quakers. Like the Quakers, the Lenape people’s government style was loose and not extremely hierarchical.<sup>13</sup> Also like the Quakers, they preferred peace over war. They were not particularly ruthless, treated female prisoners with respect, and occasionally adopted prisoners into their tribes.<sup>14</sup> This does not mean that the Lenape people were unwilling to go to war to protect their way of life, but they preferred peaceful ways of solving conflicts, such as treaties. This is one of the main reasons Quaker relations with the Lenape people remained so stable through Pennsylvania’s birth years.

### *The Holy Experiment*

Quakers experienced religious discrimination in England during the Restoration, such

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<sup>10</sup> The term Pacifism was not coined until 1901, and “denoted the principle advocacy for alternatives to war,” according to the Oxford English Dictionary. In this paper, the term represents an organizational effort to oppose war rather than the personal feelings of the Quakers.

<sup>11</sup> William Penn, “A Letter from William Penn Proprietary and Governour of Pennsylvania in America to the Committee of the Free Society of Traders of that Province, Residing in London . . .” 1683, Readex, 5.

<sup>12</sup> Maureen Hoffman, “Endangered Language, Linguistics, and Culture: Researching and Reviving the Unami Language of the Lenape” (bachelor’s thesis, Bryn Mawr College, 2009), 42.

<sup>13</sup> Paul Wallace, *Indians in Pennsylvania*, (Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1961). While there was a considerable group of people who ran in the same communities and spoke the same language, there were no official boundaries or contracts describing the Delaware Natives as one nation.

<sup>14</sup> Wallace, *Indians in Pennsylvania*, 48.

as laws prohibiting more than five of them from gathering<sup>15</sup> and the Clarendon Code.<sup>16</sup> By the time William Penn began planning his “holy experiment,” Quakers enjoyed a period of religious toleration in England.<sup>17</sup> While Penn planned his city, he “envisioned a place of refuge for the persecuted, where the spiritual union of all Christians might be more than a dream.”<sup>18</sup> Although this implies that Penn saw the non-Christian Indians as lesser than Christian Europeans, he did not refer to them as “savages” in his writings and treated them as people with a different culture rather than one that was uncivilized, unadvanced, or incorrect.<sup>19</sup>

The Quakers, led by William Penn, tried to form good relationships with the surrounding Native American tribes even before arriving in the New World. When George Fox traveled to America and hired Lenape guides to get him and his associates through the wilderness, he called their territory “Lenape Country” and understood that the Lenape had called that land home for centuries before his arrival.<sup>20</sup> He did not go into it blindly, but “obtained assistance, advice, and local perspectives from the Lenapes, Swedes, Finn, Dutch, and English who already lived along the Lenapewihittuck<sup>21</sup> and had created an inclusive, tolerant, decentralized society based on economic goals.”<sup>22</sup> Penn bought the land for Pennsylvania from the Lenape tribe, who already had experience in land sales from previous European contact. He did not claim it was “uncolonized,” as many Europeans had done before, despite Indigenous people inhabiting the land for centuries. Thomas Budd, a Quaker religious leader, praised this contract as a reason for friendly relations, saying “We settled by the Indians consent and good liking, and brought the land of them, that we settle on, which they conveyed to us by deed under their hands, and also submitted to several articles of agreement with us . . . Not to do us any injury.”<sup>23</sup> By legally obtaining the land for his experiment, Penn set a foundation of mutual respect among the Lenape and the Quakers.

### *First Impressions*

The movement of settlers into the Pennsylvania colony did not upset the friendly relationship between Quaker and Lenape leadership. In multiple instances, Penn noted the innate good-naturedness of members of the Lenape tribe, both towards the Quakers and other members of the tribe, saying that they lived by the philosophy, “nothing is

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<sup>15</sup> Penney, “Change and Continuity in Restoration Quakerism,” 6.

<sup>16</sup> A. L. Hellier, “William Penn and the Development of a Discourse of ‘Civil Rights,’” *Quaker Studies* 27, no. 1 (2022): 7–27. The Clarendon Code re-established the Church of England as the main religion in England and stopped people of other beliefs from holding public office or worshipping publicly.

<sup>17</sup> Mary Geiter, “The Restoration Crisis and the Launching of Pennsylvania, 1679–81,” *The English Historical Review* 112, no. 446 (1997): 3.

<sup>18</sup> Mary and Richard Dunn, “The Founding, 1681–1701,” in *Philadelphia: A 300-Year History*, ed. Russell F. Weigley, Nicholas B. Wainwright, and Edwin Wolf (W. W. Norton & Company, 1982), 1.

<sup>19</sup> Frederick Tolles, “Nonviolent Contact: The Quaker and The Indian,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 107, no. 2 (1963): 95

<sup>20</sup> Jean Soderlund, *Lenape Country: Delaware Valley Society Before William Penn*, (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 1.

<sup>21</sup> The Lenapewihittuck is a river that ran through Lenape country.

<sup>22</sup> Soderlund, *Lenape Country*, 149.

<sup>23</sup> Thomas Budd, “Good order established in Pennsylvania . . .” 1685, Readex, 3.

too good for a friend.”<sup>24</sup> Some Quakers believed the Natives were purer because of their “idyllic” way of life.<sup>25</sup> They were happy to point to the Lenape as a symbol of their inner-light ideals, circulating literature with themes of inherent friendliness and nobility of the Natives.<sup>26</sup> They compared the Lenape to Puritans, who they did not believe showed off the innate goodness of humanity, despite their belief in Jesus Christ. Penn praised the Lenape’s hospitality, saying, “In liberality they excel, nothing is too good for a friend.”<sup>27</sup> He attested to their incredible hospitality towards Europeans, saying, “If a European comes to see them, or calls for lodging at their home or wigwams, they give him the best place and the first cut.”<sup>28</sup> The Lenape people valued treating others with the utmost respect, regardless of nationality or religious beliefs. This is backed by multiple accounts, including that of George Fox, who had Lenape guides bring him through the wilderness of the New World and provide him with food and camping areas.<sup>29</sup> Although the Quaker colonists generally believed in the friendliness of the surrounding Natives, this did not always stop them from choosing white European financial gain over Native lives, despite claiming that place or class of birth had nothing to do with one’s inner light and value.

The Lenape tribe was accepting of the Quakers. Previous dealings with Europeans and Penn’s willingness to pay for Native land influenced the Lenape to trade the land for what they believed to be a fair deal and to draw up a deed. While they tended to move westward after the colonists settled, this was mostly due to the supply of game animals; they were not forcefully driven out. Penn set aside land for the Lenape upon request twice, at Brandywine Creek in 1685 and Ridley Creek in 1702.<sup>30</sup> Conversations between the two groups remained courteous,<sup>31</sup> and relationships between the Lenape and Quakers continued to prosper as the colony was established. The Lenape people expressed that they were interested in keeping a peaceful relationship, with Thomas Budd claiming the dying words of one Lenape were: “We are willing to have a broad path for you and us to walk in, and if the Indian is asleep in this path, the English-men shall pass by him and do no harm, and if an English-man is asleep in his path, the Indian shall pass him by and say, he is an Englishmen, he is asleep, leave him alone, he loves to sleep.”<sup>32</sup> Both parties were willing to let the other govern itself while minding the interests of the other.

### *Religion In Colonial Pennsylvania*

The shared belief of the Lenape and the Quakers in serving their fellow man provided one of the strongest bases for European and Native relations, especially compared to the strict rules other denominations required to avoid being seen as sinners. They were also both willing to get along with those who believed differently from them, creating one of the largest differences between the Quakers and other religious denominations

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<sup>24</sup> Wallace, *Indians in Pennsylvania*, 31.

<sup>25</sup> Robert Daiutolo, “The Early Quaker Perception of the Indian,” *Quaker History* 72, no. 2 (1983): 103–119.

<sup>26</sup> Budd, “Good Order Established . . .”

<sup>27</sup> Penn, “A Letter from William Penn . . .”

<sup>28</sup> Penn, “A Letter from William Penn . . .”

<sup>29</sup> Soderlund, *Lenape Country*, 5.

<sup>30</sup> Wallace, *Indians in Pennsylvania*, 130.

<sup>31</sup> Daiutolo, “The Early Quaker Perception of the Indian,” 107.

<sup>32</sup> Budd, “Good Order Established . . .” 32.

that moved to the Americas. Penn and the Quakers believed in religious freedom<sup>33</sup> and invited those of all denominations to live in Pennsylvania. They believed in using their money to help others. Thomas Budd calls attention to this in “Good order established . . .” saying, “I take into the consideration that many thousand families live under in my native country...and believing that many have a great store of money...would be willing and ready to assist those poor depressed people.”<sup>34</sup> This mindset is reminiscent of the one we see over and over in Quaker literature of this period to describe the Lenape people, who practiced hospitality even to strangers.

The Quakers' efforts to convert the Lenape people to Christianity were mostly a failure. Their response to Quaker preaching was “quiet, polite, and usually friendly,”<sup>35</sup> but conversion rates were low. Their religious ideas remained almost completely unchanged, except for a few who adopted the idea of hell.<sup>36</sup> Relations with the Quakers remained strong due to the avoidance of multiple conversion attempts, allowing the Natives to say no to repeated Gospel stories.<sup>37</sup>

The Lenape had their own religion. There is a lack of written accounts from the Quakers, who “showed little effort in learning Lenape concept clearly,”<sup>38</sup> leading to mistranslated and oversimplified religious words. This, combined with the lack of a Lenape written language, has made it difficult to fully understand religion from their perspective today. They “believed that the earth and sky formed a realm of which they were a part, not the masters.”<sup>39</sup>

Their belief in souls was even stronger than the Quakers, as they believed that souls could be found in everything, such as people, animals, plants, and rocks. These souls could also be guardians, usually for young men. Sachems<sup>40</sup> emphasized the importance of kindness to all people. One of the greatest examples of this is the sachem Ockanichon, whose dying words, recorded by Thomas Budd, stated: “Now inasmuch I have delivered my heart into the Bosom, I also deliver my bosom to keep my heart therein; therefore always be sure to walk within the good path and never depart out of it. And if any Indians should speak any evil of Indians or Christians, do not join with it, but to look at that which is good, and join with the same always.”<sup>41</sup> Despite shared Lenape and Quaker teachings of tolerance, Quakers tended to look down upon the Native religion. While not limiting them, they often met Native practices, such as the veneration of dreams, with ridicule. The Lenape believed dreams could “offer insight into coming events and uncover hidden aspects of the present.”<sup>42</sup> Quakers saw this as

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<sup>33</sup> They expected Europeans to follow some denomination of Christianity, but not necessarily Quakerism. This did not extend to surrounding Native tribes, and although there were some attempts at conversion, they did not attempt to stop them from practicing their own religion.

<sup>34</sup> Budd, “Good Order Established . . .” 3.

<sup>35</sup> Stephen Angell, “‘Learn of the Heathen’: Quakers and Indians in Southern New England, 1656–1676,” *Quaker History* 92, no. 1 (2003): 3.

<sup>36</sup> Wallace, *Indians in Pennsylvania*, 69.

<sup>37</sup> Angell, “‘Learn of the Heathen,’” 8.

<sup>38</sup> James O’Neill Spady, “Colonialism and the Discursive Antecedents of William Penn’s Treaty with the Indians,” in *Friends and Enemies of Penn’s Woods: Indians, Colonists, and the Racial Construction of Pennsylvania*, ed. William A. Pencak and Daniel K. Richter (Pennsylvania State University, 2004), 21.

<sup>39</sup> Soderlund, *Lenape Country*, 21.

<sup>40</sup> This is the English word for Native “kings,” although they did not have as much power as equivalent European rulers and relied on the advice of elders and the will of the people.

<sup>41</sup> Budd, “Good Order Established . . .” 36.

<sup>42</sup> Gunlög Fur, *A Nation of Women: Gender and Colonial Encounters Among the Delaware Indians* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 17.

“primitive superstition.”<sup>43</sup>

While this is not very strong criticism compared to Christian-based colonies who claimed Native practices were devil worship, it displays some of the elitism that Quakers felt over the Natives simply for being of European descent and raised Christian.

### *Quaker and Lenape Governments*

While they may have looked down upon their religion, Quaker leaders claimed to be impressed with the Lenape government. The Lenape and Quaker people were both quite progressive and anti-hierarchical for the time. However, even in his description of admiration for the Lenape government, Thomas Budd wrote in a superior tone, surprised that Natives could form such a sophisticated system on their own. He said, “They are many of them of a good understanding, considering their education; and in their public meeting of business they have excellent order, one speaking after another, and while one is speaking all the rest keep silent, and do not so much as whisper to one another.”<sup>44</sup> These meetings were conducted similarly to Quaker religious and government meetings but were established well before the Lenape and Quakers met. Both preferred a community-centered approach to government, with leaders acting more as facilitators than kings.<sup>45</sup> Even William Penn, who mostly showed great respect to the Lenape people, saw them as “lazy” for asking to use the resources they had always had before Europeans showed up.<sup>46</sup> There is also no evidence that Quakers and the Lenape people exchanged ideas about justice, and they most likely continued to operate almost fully independently.<sup>47</sup>

While their governments were separate, both sides took action to protect the other under their laws. Lenape leaders encouraged their people to practice kindness and hospitality toward the Quakers. The Quakers ensured the Natives were legally protected, although not until 1728 with a proclamation from Lieutenant Governor Patrick Gordon, which said, “The said Indians shall have the full and free privilege of immunities of all the said laws as any other inhabitants, they duly acknowledging the authority and power of the crown of England and Government of this Province.”<sup>48</sup> Native children were allowed to attend public schools, as Budd establishes, saying, “The children of Indians may have the good learning with the children of rich people,<sup>49</sup> let them be maintained free of charge to their parents, out of the profits of the school, arising by the work of the scholars, by which poor people and the Indians, as well as the rich, will have their children taught.” Other laws, such as “The Law about Indian Traders,”<sup>50</sup> were designed to protect the Natives against people trying to take advantage of them. The law called out those trying to take advantage of the local

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<sup>43</sup> Wallace, *Indians in Pennsylvania*, 69.

<sup>44</sup> Budd, “Good Order Established . . .” 16.

<sup>45</sup> Wallace, *Indians in Pennsylvania*, 54.

<sup>46</sup> Wallace, *Indians in Pennsylvania*, 54.

<sup>47</sup> Marianne O. Nielsen and Barbara M. Heather, *Finding Right Relations: Quakers, Native Americans, and Settler Colonialism* (The University of Arizona Press, 2022), 30.

<sup>48</sup> “Copy of a contract between Mr. Penn and the Indians in the neighbourhood of Pennsylvania,” 2.

<sup>49</sup> Budd, “Good Order Established . . .” 15. While not relevant to this argument, the full quote includes the children of the poor, meaning the “children of the rich” was meant to contrast with the poor rather than the Natives. Therefore, this law does not imply that Natives are the opposite of rich people.

<sup>50</sup> Pennsylvania, “The laws of the province of Pennsylvania collected into one volumn [sic], by order of the governour and Assembly of the said province,” Chapter XCVI.

Natives, saying they “come to the province and privately and clandestinely deal with the Indians . . . and also oppress and abuse them in their way of trading and dealing with them.” It enacted multiple protections, including that “no person, non-resident [may] deal or trade with any Indians within this government, among any pretense whatsoever,” and “nobody within the province or territories [may] presume to deal or trade with the Indians in the woods, at their towns or wigwams, after any private or clandestine matter, but at their respective mansion houses.” It was supposed to prevent anyone from taking advantage of the Lenape people and surrounding Natives, but it failed to account for the fact that the Lenape participated in trade before the Quakers arrived in America.

There are also laws in which the Quakers do more for the Native Americans (and other oppressed groups) than other colonies but still leave room for the comfort of Europeans over the safety of the Natives. This is clear in “An Act to Prevent the Importation of Indian Slaves.”<sup>51</sup> This law bans the importation of Natives into slavery, but it provides quite a few loopholes. It does not free enslaved Natives bought before March 25th, 1706. It also does not protect slaves who escaped from other areas. Concerningly, it does not even promise freedom to illegally imported enslaved Natives. Instead, it says they will be “forfeited to the government, and shall either be set at liberty or otherwise disposed of as the governor and council shall see cause.” This law, while helpful in theory, did not provide all the protection that the Lenape people provided to the Quakers. Instead, it exemplified the Quakers’ view that European property rights were more important than Indigenous people’s right to control their own lives, a view that is still dominant in the American government’s treatment of Native American people today.

Another law that follows this pattern is “An Act to Prevent the Importation of Negroes<sup>52</sup> and Indians into this Province.”<sup>53</sup> It calls out the slave trade for “barbarous murder” and calls to attention the “umbrage of suspicion and dissatisfaction” given to nearby Natives. However, it also provides several loopholes, including a cutoff date. If enslaved people were purchased before that date, they did not have to be freed. The law provided time to import enslaved people after it passed, a runaway exception, and restitution if an enslaver found out the government sold his runaway enslaved person, even after a year of holding. While these laws are better than nothing, they are nowhere near full abolition in Pennsylvania and show a prioritization of white comfort, despite claiming that the “inner light” in the souls of Natives was just as valuable as that in Europeans.

While these laws did not provide full protection, when the Lenape people felt they were being wronged by the Quaker government, they were not afraid to use their voices. For example, in New Jersey, the Quaker leaders attempted to set up a system in which any Native tried for a crime would be tried by a jury that was half Native and half European.<sup>54</sup> While this likely would have been fairer than the all-white trials or no trials in most colonies, the Lenape people would have been subjected to mixed juries, while Europeans would be judged by all-white juries. If a white person committed a crime against a Native person, then they would be tried by a jury of only their peers. If a Native person committed a crime against a white person, then they would be judged by a jury of half of their peers and half of their victim’s peers.

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<sup>51</sup> “The laws of the province of Pennsylvania collected into one volumn sic,” Chapter XXX.

<sup>52</sup> This is another term that is used only in the context of a quote from a primary source, as it is not the proper way to refer to the Africans who were enslaved and brought to America.

<sup>53</sup> “The laws of the province of Pennsylvania collected into one volumn sic,” Chapter X.

<sup>54</sup> Soderlund, *Lenape Country*, 142.

The Lenape people worked with the Quakers to get legislation passed; they were not complacent bystanders. Upon first reading of “An Act Against Selling Rums and Other Strong Liquors to the Indians,”<sup>55</sup> it seems as though the Quakers unfairly discriminated against the Natives and infantilized them with phrasing such as “many of them are not able to govern themselves in the use [of alcohol], (as by sad experience is too well known.)” and “they are generally apt to drink themselves to great excess.” However, the Quakers did not propose this law. The law goes on to say that this is a protection because the Lenape are “liable to be cheated, [and] reduced to great poverty and want [when in a drunken state].” The law itself states that it was requested by sachems who “earnestly desired that no European should be permitted to carry rum to their towns because of the mischief before expressed.” The Quakers claimed in the law that the reason for its passing was “These evil practices tend to the great dishonour of God, scandal of the Christian religion, and hindrance to the embracing thereof, as well as judging the judgements of God upon the country, it not timely prevented, for the prevention whereof for the future.” Thomas Budd expands on this reasoning and mentions that the reason the Quakers litigated this and not the Lenape people was that they “have not a government of themselves.”<sup>56</sup> He quotes a sachem who said, “They did not see it to be hurtful for us to drink it, although we may know it to be hurtful to us, but if people will sell it to us, we are so in love with it that we cannot forbear it.” While it is important that they were able to pass the legislation necessary for their community, their ability to do so is proof that the Lenape people stood up for themselves, and the language about “drunken Indians” in the law books was exaggerated and unnecessary. As for the “lack of” Lenape government, Jean Soderland describes their style of leadership as “democratic and egalitarian.”<sup>57</sup> They had leaders, the sachems, but their rule was held only by “consulting with a counsel of elders and following the expectations of their people.” Their main job was not to function as a ruler of the people, but to act as a diplomat in outside affairs, fulfill ceremonial obligations, oversee communal hunts, and act as a “distributor” of food, goods, and justice, giving them the ability to “influence the harmony and stability of the village.”<sup>58</sup> While they lacked written laws and disliked hierarchy, there was advancement and order in Lenape society, and it was more communal than European cultures. Their conventions and rules were not written down. It was easier for Lenape leadership to ask Quaker leadership to control their people's sales, as it would be their government controlling them. Quakers were more likely to listen to and respect their own leadership than Lenape leadership, as Quakers still believed in their own superiority.

### *Social Components*

Many Lenape and Quaker social customs were not all that different from each other. Both Quaker and Lenape women had a relatively higher social status than was common at the time.<sup>59</sup> While both were subject to gender roles in labor and were usually not allowed to participate in government, they were seen as individuals with rights, rather than under the coverture of their husbands. They could accuse or be accused of adultery, sign contracts, and speak at religious gatherings. If anything,

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<sup>55</sup> “The laws of the province of Pennsylvania collected into one volumn sic,” Chapter CVI.

<sup>56</sup> Budd, “Good Order Established . . .” 30.

<sup>57</sup> Soderland, *Lenape Country*, 13.

<sup>58</sup> Fur, *A Nation of Women*, 29.

<sup>59</sup> Wallace, *Indians in Pennsylvania*, 19.

Lenape women may have even had more freedom than Quaker women. They were often consulted about their opinions and were seen as responsible for much of the organization and distribution efforts throughout Lenape country.

Overall, Quakers moving into Pennsylvania did not affect the daily lives of the Lenape people all that much. They continued to practice their religion, rejecting Christianity. They continued to live their lives as they had before, but did not completely reject European advancements. They developed wampum as a form of trade.<sup>60</sup> They also recognized the superiority of some European tools and adopted them to improve their daily lives.<sup>61</sup> There were some unintentional negative impacts on the Lenape people's livelihood. Despite earlier contact with Europeans, the influx of Quaker settlers resulted in an influx of disease, with one Lenape historian estimating that the arrival of one colonist resulted in one to two Lenape deaths.<sup>62</sup> Although this was not the Quakers' intention, it resulted in many Lenape moving inward, away from European disease and resource competition.

The Lenape were not only learning from the Quakers, though. Quakers generally saw the Natives as intelligent,<sup>63</sup> and did not necessarily see their way of life as lesser than the European customs, although some bias is certainly visible in their legislation. William Penn was specifically interested in the Lenape language. He described it as "imperfect in their tenses, wanting in their moods, participles, adverbs, connections, interjections."<sup>64</sup> This may seem insulting, but he follows it up with an interesting qualifier: "I know not a language spoken in Europe, that hath words of more sweetness or greatness, in accent or emphasis, than theirs." Rather than complaining about the difficulty of the language, he seemed fascinated by the unique way in which it communicated greatness and awe. He was also interested in the connection aspect of learning the language, saying, "I have made it my business to understand it, that I might not want an interpreter on any occasion." This showed his commitment to continuing peaceful relations with the Lenape people and keeping open communication lines.

One issue with determining how much the Quakers and the Lenape people affected each other's daily lives is the fact that they already lived similar lifestyles. In *Lenape Country*, Soderlund argues that "while the Lenapes introduced some European technology and customs into their daily lives, they refused to adopt Christianity, retaining their religion and worldview. They adhered to their egalitarian norms and preferred peace over war with other nations."<sup>65</sup> It is difficult to tell what effect they had on each other in these areas, as they had already come to similar conclusions on their own about these customs. They were two separate people with two separate cultures, but they respected each other's right to choose their own beliefs and government style, and leaders on both sides pushed for hospitality to the other. They were not one united people, but they were happy to be neighbors. They interacted casually and in a friendly way, eating meals together, watching each other's children, and existing as a community, despite coming from two different cultures.

### ***Conclusion***

The relationship between the Lenape and the Quakers was not repeated elsewhere in

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<sup>60</sup> Wallace, *Indians in Pennsylvania*, 56.

<sup>61</sup> Wallace, *Indians in Pennsylvania*, 7.

<sup>62</sup> Spady, "Colonialism and the Discursive Antecedents of Penn's Treaty with the Indians," 37.

<sup>63</sup> Daitulo, "The Early Quaker Perception of the Indian," 109.

<sup>64</sup> "A Letter from William Penn Proprietary and Governour of Pennsylvania in America to the Committee of the Free Society of Traders of that Province," 5.

<sup>65</sup> Soderlund, *Lenape Country*, 25.

the colonies. While it is easy to point to the Quaker religion as the main cause of this unique relationship, it is only one of many factors that contributed to the peace between the two societies as Pennsylvania was born. The Quakers believed that every person had an “inner light.” They also believed that the Lenape people provided a better example of the hospitality and service that human beings were supposed to provide to one another than most European Christians. When compared to the Puritans, who banished those who did not follow the same beliefs as they did, the Lenape seemed more Christlike. The Lenape’s own religion had an even stronger belief in souls, tying them not only to all humans but to animals, plants, and other natural objects. The fact that both religions and governments promoted peace, even if neither had fully leaned into pacifism, was also a large factor in the two groups’ continuing friendly relations.

This friendly relationship usually led to the Quakers and the Lenape people working together on important legislation. For example, Lieutenant Governor Patrick Gordon pointed to Penn’s legal acquisition of the land for Pennsylvania as the main cause of the peace, saying,

The inhabitants thereof have hitherto enjoyed a continued course of peace and tranquility, secured from all hostilities, either by invasion or insurrection, to which nothing, under the divine hand, has more efficiently contributed than the prudent care that was taken by the proprietor to enter into a firm alliance and sincerer friendship with all the Indian-Natives.<sup>66</sup>

This is another important cause in the friendly nature of the relationship, but not the full story. Not only were Quakers willing to have a proper contract and pay for their land, but the Lenape people were willing to sell it to them. This detail can be traced back to the right combination of many factors, including the hospitality of the Lenape people, previous contact with Europeans, and their generally peaceful disposition.

Once a friendly relationship was established, even more factors contributed to the relationship remaining friendly. This includes the Quakers’ willingness to avoid repeated conversion attempts as well as their willingness to work with Lenape sachems to create laws that protected Native interests. While there was still bias in Quaker legislation towards the Lenape people and other marginalized groups, it was likely a result of inherent bias rather than a malicious attack. The Quakers, especially their leader, William Penn, respected the Lenape culture to a higher degree than other European colonies. The Lenape people did not have an issue with the nearby colonization of the Quakers, as they had asked permission, legally bought the land, and did not attempt to force their religion and culture on the Natives. By deciding to work with the Lenape people instead of against or without them, the Quakers created a more tolerant government than other European colonies in America.

Quakers were instructed to “treat all the said Indians with the same regard they would an English subject.”<sup>67</sup> The Lenape people were instructed to treat the Quakers as neighbors and provide the best care for them when visiting. While the Quakers’ treatment of Native Americans certainly was not perfect, it is one example of a colonial government and a Native tribe working together rather than fighting for resources for a sustained period. Because of the relationship between the Quaker and the Lenape people, we have proof that two groups from different cultures can coexist and even form a beneficial friendship. However, we also see how the Lenape people suffered due to the Quakers’ inherent bias towards Europeans and the European way of life. No matter how well two cultures get along, if one believes in its own supremacy, that must be considered when reviewing its actions. The relationship

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<sup>66</sup> Lieutenant Governor Patrick Gordon, “By the Honourable Patrick Gordon, Esq; lieutenant governour of the province of Pennsylvania . . . A proclamation . . .”

<sup>67</sup> Gordon, “A Proclamation for prevention of all further breaches of the established peace and friendship between us and the said Natives.”

between the Quakers and the Lenape people is an example of friendship that can be improved by embracing and understanding other cultures while recognizing and counteracting biases that come from within. From the original acquisition of land to protective legislation, in the early years of Penn's holy experiment in Pennsylvania, the relationship between the Quakers and the Lenape people thrived, especially when their common humanity shone through. These two groups established a friendship that was not seen in many places of European colonization throughout the Americas, remained during the early years of the establishment of Pennsylvania, and provides a blueprint for multicultural nations today.

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# WEAPONIZING INTEREST CONVERGENCE: The Civil Rights Movement's Cold War Strategy

Lawson Wright

In 1952, during the final weeks of Harry S. Truman's presidency, the United States Department of Justice filed a brief in a case that would soon redefine the country's legal, political, and social landscape: *Brown v. Board of Education*.<sup>1</sup> *Brown*, along with its companion cases, represented the culmination of decades of tenacious litigation spearheaded by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) to combat racism in American law.<sup>2</sup> While the Department of Justice's brief exalts the moral importance of equality under law, it focuses on something which seems out of place in the traditional narrative of the Civil Rights Movement: the Cold War. According to the brief, "[t]he United States is trying to prove to the people of the world, of every nationality, race, and color, that a free democracy is the most civilized and secure form of government yet devised by man."<sup>3</sup> Racial segregation undermined that goal; the practice "furnishes grist for the Communist propaganda mills, and it raises doubts even among friendly nations as to the intensity of our devotion to the democratic faith."<sup>4</sup> Segregation in the nation's capital—the "window through which the world looks into our house"—was particularly problematic, the brief warned.<sup>5</sup> Foreign diplomats with darker skin were often discriminated against or denied service, crippling their good will towards the United States and challenging national assertions about the supremacy of American democracy.<sup>6</sup> In a two-page block quote, the brief outlined Secretary of State Dean Acheson's view on the matter:

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<sup>1</sup> *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).

<sup>2</sup> In the years leading up to *Brown*, the NAACP pursued litigation in, *inter alia*, *Shelley v. Kraemer*, 334 U.S. 1 (1948); *Henderson v. United States*, 339 U.S. 816 (1950); *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents*, 339 U.S. 637 (1950); *Sweatt v. Painter*, 339 U.S. 629 (1950). *Brown* was consolidated with its companion case, *Bolling v. Sharpe*, 347 U.S. 497 (1954).

<sup>3</sup> Brief for the United States as Amicus Curiae at 6, *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954), reprinted in Philip B. Kurland and Gerhard Casper, eds., *Landmark Briefs and Arguments of the Supreme Court of the United States: Constitutional Law* (University Publications of America, 1975), 49: 121.

<sup>4</sup> Brief for the United States as Amicus Curiae, *supra* note 3, at 6, reprinted in *Landmark Briefs*, *supra* note 3, 49: 121.

<sup>5</sup> Brief for the United States as Amicus Curiae, *supra* note 3, at 4, reprinted in *Landmark Briefs*, *supra* note 3, 49:119.

<sup>6</sup> Brief for the United States as Amicus Curiae, *supra* note 3, at 5, reprinted in *Landmark Briefs*, *supra* note 3, 49: 120. The brief, quoting a report from the President's Committee on Civil Rights, notes another harmful effect of domestic racism on American foreign policy interests: segregation against diplomats from African or Asian nations. Brief for the United States as Amicus Curiae, *supra* note 3, at 5, reprinted in *Landmark Briefs*, *supra* note 3, 49: 120–1. This discrimination confirmed what these diplomats already knew about American race relations, shattering any façade the federal government attempted to erect. For example, Indian ambassador G. L. Mehta was discriminated against and harassed at the Houston Airport in 1955, drawing the attention of the American and Indian news media. Nico Slate, *Colored Cosmopolitanism: The Shared Struggle for Freedom in the United States and India* (Harvard University Press, 2012), 178. As more and more nations gained their independence, this issue

During the past six years, the damage to our foreign relations attributable to [racial discrimination] has become progressively greater. The United States is under constant attack in the foreign press, over the foreign radio, and in such international bodies as the United Nations because of various practices of discrimination against minority groups in this country. As might be expected, Soviet spokesmen regularly exploit this situation in propaganda against the United States, both within the United Nations and through radio broadcasts and the press, which reaches all corners of the world. Some of these attacks against us are based on falsehood or distortion; but the undeniable existence of racial discrimination gives unfriendly governments the most effective kind of misinformation for their propaganda warfare.<sup>7</sup>

Soviet propaganda highlighted and exposed the hypocrisy of America's claim to moral leadership of the free world; images often juxtaposed the lynching of African Americans next to an iconic symbol of American freedom—the Statue of Liberty.<sup>8</sup> The result of this propaganda was significant, and the national security stakes for civil rights reform were high. Hostility among non-aligned African and Asian nations towards the United States was growing on account of this issue. According to the brief, “In such countries the view is expressed more and more vocally that the United States is hypocritically claiming to be the champion of democracy while permitting practices of racial discrimination.”<sup>9</sup> Especially to people of color around the world, egalitarian American rhetoric appeared to starkly contradict the reality for African Americans. While this in and of itself was not a new phenomenon, America had not previously been engaged in a global ideological struggle over the forces of Communism. In unequivocal terms, the Secretary of State called on the Supreme Court to act to shield the vital interests of a nation now at war; racial discrimination “jeopardizes the effective maintenance of our moral leadership of the free world and democratic nations of the world.”<sup>10</sup> As the Cold War came into focus, alliances with recently decolonized so-called “Third World” nations became the object of intense geopolitical competition.<sup>11</sup> The executive branch, through its brief, sought to use the Supreme Court's judicial power to remedy this strategic vulnerability and help win the Cold War.

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became increasingly important to State Department officials. See Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton University Press, 2011), 152–3; Jonathan Eig, *King: A Life* (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2023), 114; George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations since 1776* (Oxford University Press, 2008), 655–6; Michael J. Klarman, “Brown, Racial Change, and the Civil Rights Movement,” *Virginia Law Review* 80, no. 1 (1994): 29.

<sup>7</sup> Brief for the United States as Amicus Curiae, *supra* note 3, at 7, reprinted in *Landmark Briefs*, *supra* note 3, 49: 122.

<sup>8</sup> For examples of Soviet propaganda evoking the juxtaposition between American racism and the Statue of Liberty, see Print from the Soviet *Bezbozhnik u Stanka* magazine showing a lynched Black American hanging from the Statue of Liberty, illustration, 1930; “View from the Sea . . . and Closer,” Soviet Cartoon Published in *Krokodil* Magazine, photograph, 1961.

<sup>9</sup> Brief for the United States as Amicus Curiae, *supra* note 3, at 7, reprinted in *Landmark Briefs*, *supra* note 3, 49: 122.

<sup>10</sup> Brief for the United States as Amicus Curiae, *supra* note 3, at 8, reprinted in *Landmark Briefs*, *supra* note 3, 49: 123. Henry Cabot Lodge Jr., the United States' Ambassador to the United Nations and namesake of his father, a celebrated Massachusetts Senator, described racial segregation as the nation's “Achilles' heel before the world.” Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 656.

<sup>11</sup> Odd Arne Westad, *The Cold War: A World History* (Basic Books, 2017), 261–286; Klarman, “Brown, Racial Change, and the Civil Rights Movement” 26; Mary L. Dudziak, “Desegregation as a Cold War Imperative,” *Stanford Law Review* 41, no. 1 (1988): 62–3.

This Cold War imperative for civil rights change has received significant scholarly attention in recent decades. Drawing upon evidence like the Department of Justice's brief in the case, scholar Derrick Bell has pointed to *Brown* as an instance of what he terms "interest convergence."<sup>12</sup> According to his theory, "[t]he interest of blacks in achieving racial equality will be accommodated only when it converges with the interests of whites."<sup>13</sup> Bell contends that progress for African Americans was a product of a favorable alignment of circumstances: it is only because of the existence of a Cold War imperative that the Supreme Court outlawed public school segregation in *Brown*.<sup>14</sup> Scholars, with Mary L. Dudziak at the forefront, have marshaled considerable historical evidence in support of Bell's thesis, demonstrating how Cold War concerns motivated the federal government to support civil rights reform, including but not limited to *Brown*.<sup>15</sup> Beyond merely influencing the Department of Justice to wade into the case, Dudziak and others present compelling arguments that the Cold War played a meaningful role in shaping the thinking of justices on the Supreme Court.<sup>16</sup>

Despite this wealth of scholarship, some academics have challenged Bell's thesis. In a 2011 article, Yale Law School Professor Justin Driver argues that the theory is flawed because it "accords an almost complete absence of agency to two

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<sup>12</sup> Derrick A. Bell, Jr., "Brown v. Board of Education and the Interest-Convergence Dilemma," *Harvard Law Review* 93, no. 3 (1980): 523. Bell cites the Department of Justice's briefs in *Brown* as his evidence for this proposition. Bell, "Brown v. Board," 524.

<sup>13</sup> Bell, "Brown v. Board," 523. Bell subsequently reaffirmed his commitment to his interest convergence theory in Derrick A. Bell, Jr., *Silent Covenants: Brown v. Board of Education and the Unfulfilled Hopes for Racial Reform* (Oxford University Press, 2004), 58–68. See also Derrick A. Bell, Jr., "Racial Remediation: An Historical Perspective on Current Condition," *Notre Dame Law Review* 52, no. 1 (1976): 11–12; Derrick Bell, *Afrolantica Legacies* (Third World Press, 1998), 116–9.

<sup>14</sup> Bell, "Brown v. Board," 524. Bell also argues that, in addition to supporting the nation's Cold War interests, "*Brown* offered much needed reassurance to American blacks that the precepts of equality and freedom so heralded during World War II might yet be given meaning at home." Bell, "Brown v. Board," 524.

<sup>15</sup> Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*; Mary L. Dudziak, "Brown as a Cold War Case," *The Journal of American History* 91, no. 1 (2004); Dudziak, "Desegregation as a Cold War Imperative"; John David Skrentny, "The Effect of the Cold War on African-American Civil Rights: America and the World Audience, 1945–1968," *Theory and Society* 27, no. 2 (1998); Klarman, "Brown, Racial Change, and the Civil Rights Movement," 26–9; Phillip A. Klinker and Rogers M. Smith, *The Unsteady March: The Rise and Decline of Racial Equality in America* (University of Chicago Press, 1999), 202–241. In a 1988 *Stanford Law Review* Article, Dudziak wrote that "I conclude by suggesting that this article demonstrates Derrick Bell's interest-convergence thesis: The consensus against racial segregation in the 1950s resulted from a convergence of interests on the part of whites and persons of color." Dudziak, "Desegregation as a Cold War Imperative," 66. See also Albert P. Blaustein and Clarence Clyde Ferguson, Jr., *Desegregation and the Law: The Meaning and Effect of the School Segregation Cases* (Rutgers University Press, 1957), 10–13; Penny M. Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Harvard University Press, 2004); C. Vann Woodward and William S. McFeely, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, commemorative ed. (Oxford University Press, 2002), 130–4 (citing the Department of Justice's discussion of the Cold War in their briefs in *Brown*).

<sup>16</sup> Dudziak, "Brown as a Cold War Case," 37–8; Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 104–06; Kathleen A. Bergin, "Authenticating American Democracy," *Pace Law Review* 26, no. 2 (2006). See also Blaustein and Ferguson, *Desegregation and the Law*, 10–13 (stating that "it is inconceivable that the international discord between East and West had no effect upon the nine men who were to determine a national discord between North and South").

groups of actors who exercise a great deal of control regarding the advancement of black interests: the black citizenry and the white judiciary.”<sup>17</sup> Concerning the first of these two groups, Driver notes that Bell totally disregards the manifest power that black political mobilization and demonstration had in forcing civil rights progress. If Bell’s theory was unquestioningly accepted, black Americans would be recast to merely “the role of bystanders to the events of American history, individuals who occasionally get swept up in the current of world affairs but have a negligible role in shaping those affairs.”<sup>18</sup> Their agency would be falsely and ahistorically eradicated.

The contrast between Bell and Driver, however, need not be so black-and-white. This paper argues that their theories are not mutually exclusive. Bell’s theory, at least insofar as it recognizes the power of interest convergence, correctly captures an important dynamic of civil rights progress; government actors were historically more likely to act on issues of civil rights when they implicated Cold War considerations. However, an appreciation of this phenomenon does not necessarily strip civil rights activists of their agency. Almost paradoxically, African Americans recognized the power that interest convergence could hold and explicitly forged transnational solidarity with individuals, groups, and communities around the world in a deliberate attempt to force otherwise domestic issues of race to converge with the nation’s Cold War geopolitical interests. Rather than passively benefiting from interest convergence, African Americans deployed the theory as a weapon—their weapon—to help bring about civil rights action. While civil rights activists pursued this strategy around the globe, they particularly focused their efforts on India because of the country’s extraordinary geopolitical importance and the longstanding ties between the Indian people and the African American community. Through letters, petitions, newspaper articles, memoirs, speeches, and countless other sources, this paper will chart the story of those connections, exploring the complex ways in which black Americans sought to bring about change at home by internationalizing their issues through India. Appreciating Bell’s interest convergence theory does not require us to remove important voices from the historical narrative; we simply need to tell a more complete story.

### **Creating a Cold War Imperative**

Over the course of the Second World War, many African Americans had increasingly connected their struggles against racism at home with the fight against fascism and imperialism abroad to formulate a global vision of liberation.<sup>19</sup> This transnational fusion was well-captured in *The Pittsburgh Courier*’s “double victory” (or Double-V) campaign, which, building on the work of earlier leftist activists, argued that fascism could only be defeated if the nation first remedied its domestic racism.<sup>20</sup> During the

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<sup>17</sup> Justin Driver, “Rethinking the Interest-Convergence Thesis,” *Northwestern University Law Review* 105, no. 149 (2015): 175.

<sup>18</sup> Driver, “Rethinking the Interest-Convergence,” 177.

<sup>19</sup> African Americans who internationalized their civil rights issues during and after WWII were building upon a long history of black internationalism dating back to at least the early 20th century. See, for example, Penny M. Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937–1957* (Cornell University Press, 1997); Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Rising Wind: Black Americans and U.S. Foreign Affairs, 1935–1969* (University of North Carolina Press, 1996). Although strands of black internationalism existed before WWII, the war helped to popularize and disseminate these ideas as African Americans either became more attentive to foreign affairs or themselves traveled abroad to serve in the military.

<sup>20</sup> Kevin Gaines, “The Civil Rights Movement in World Perspective,” *OAH Magazine of History* 21, no. 1 (January 2007): 58–9.

war, many African Americans were deployed around the world; this foreign service further internationalized their understanding of the issues they faced at home. For example, twenty thousand black U.S. soldiers were stationed in India, where they began forming meaningful solidarity with Indians who faced the horrors of colonization.<sup>21</sup> Indian independence quickly became intertwined with African American conceptions of a global double victory as both groups saw connections between their struggles.<sup>22</sup> To many, fascism and imperialism were one and the same. In a 1942 poll of ten thousand black Americans conducted by *The Pittsburgh Courier*, 87.8 percent answered “yes” to the question, “Do you believe that India should continue to contend for her rights and liberty now?”<sup>23</sup> In September 1942, four thousand people attended a Rally for the Cause of Free India in New York, at which African American speakers called for the release of Jawaharlal Nehru—an independence leader and India’s future prime minister—from prison.<sup>24</sup> Paul Robeson, a civil rights leader, event organizer, and leftist who had consistently advocated for black internationalism, proclaimed that “we have much in common” with the Indian independence movement. The thread uniting these two groups was their shared conviction that racism and imperialism must end. World War II was, according to Robeson, “a war for the liberation of all peoples, all races, and all colors oppressed anywhere in the world.” To the extent that the twin evils of domestic racism and foreign colonization persisted, he argued, the sanctity of the Allied struggle in World War II would be undermined.<sup>25</sup>

In the aftermath of World War II, the one million American black men and women who served in the conflict expected to be rewarded for their service with long-overdue civil rights progress at home.<sup>26</sup> Many, having just risked their lives in the name of democracy and the defense of other minorities, returned to America more convinced than ever that segregation in their own country was unacceptable. Bayard Rustin, a future civil rights leader, put it bluntly: “We are not going to put up with this anymore.”<sup>27</sup> Rustin’s feelings were widely shared. One black fighter pilot was prepared “to help defeat the domestic enemies back home: Jim Crow attitudes and practices in government, schools, jobs, churches—everywhere!”<sup>28</sup> African Americans shared with many others a sense of Post-War optimism and hope—a sense that they could conquer the evils at home that they had so valiantly fought abroad. Another veteran, a corporal from Alabama, declared, “I spent four years in the army to free a bunch of Dutchmen and Frenchmen, and I’m hanged if I’m going to let the Alabama version of the Germans kick me around when I get home. No sirreee-bob!”<sup>29</sup> The

<sup>21</sup> Slate, *Colored Cosmopolitanism*, 127.

<sup>22</sup> Slate, *Colored Cosmopolitanism*, 133.

<sup>23</sup> Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire*, 28.

<sup>24</sup> Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire*, 28.

<sup>25</sup> Martin Bauml Duberman, *Paul Robeson* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1988), 266; Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire*, 28–9. Robeson and other black leaders likewise theorized and built connections between the struggles of African Americans and those of Chinese communists, with whom they formed solidarity. Robeson Taj Frazier, *The East Is Black: Cold War China in the Black Radical Imagination* (Duke University Press, 2015).

<sup>26</sup> Matthew F. Delmont, *Half American: The Epic Story of African Americans Fighting WWII at Home and Abroad* (Viking, 2022), xiii; Klinker and Smith, *The Unsteady March*, 202.

<sup>27</sup> Thomas E. Ricks, *Waging a Good War: A Military History of the Civil Rights Movement, 1954–1968* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2022), 4.

<sup>28</sup> Ricks, *Waging a Good War*, 4.

<sup>29</sup> James T. Patterson, *Grand Expectations*, vol. X, *The Oxford History of the United States* (Oxford University Press, 1996), 23.

connection between racism and Nazism was obvious to many African Americans: the former was just the “Alabama version” of the latter. World War II’s sacrosanct goal, therefore, could only be completed by ending segregation at home. These sentiments, fueled by an active black press, drove a massive expansion in the NAACP’s membership, from fifty thousand in 1940 to at least four hundred thousand by 1945.<sup>30</sup>

The end of World War II produced two fundamental changes in the international order, which would open the door for African Americans to exploit Bell’s theory of interest convergence: worldwide decolonization and the emergence of the Cold War. WWII was enormously costly and resource-intensive; the once-great European imperial powers now found their grip over their colonial possessions tenuous at best. With European nations too weak to resist colonial demands for independence, the immediate Post-War period experienced a wave of decolonization around the world.<sup>31</sup> India, at last, gained her independence. Alone, this development may not have had any tangible effect on the American Civil Rights Movement. The birth of the Cold War, however, occurred around the same time. The nascent geopolitical conflict imputed to India, the largest nation in its region, immense international importance.<sup>32</sup> Both the United States and its Cold War adversary, the Soviet Union, sought to court favor with the new nation and draw her into their respective spheres of influence. In 1953, the president of the NAACP, Walter White, received a letter from a Buffalo, New York, resident suggesting that because India was “so vitally important to world stability and future security,” the NAACP should “appeal to India as they are a dark race, to help our people in America.”<sup>33</sup> This resident may not have realized it, but civil rights organizations like the NAACP had been pursuing this very strategy since the early days of the Cold War. African Americans recognized they could use the newfound strategic importance of non-aligned nations to advance civil rights at home. Nowhere in the Third World illustrates this effort better than in India, which was a uniquely important Cold War player and with which the African American community had a longstanding connection. Civil rights organizations and leaders embarked upon a deliberate campaign to cultivate support for their cause in India while simultaneously linking domestic civil rights with the Cold War. Black Americans, draping their rhetoric in the American flag, exhorted their leaders to act on issues of civil rights out of Cold War concern.

As the Cold War heated up, civil rights leaders and members of the black press began to argue that hiring African Americans as diplomats would be beneficial to counteracting global perceptions of America’s racism. The *Pittsburgh Courier*, a black newspaper, began a campaign for the Department to State to improve its hiring practices, claiming that “the expansion of opportunities for Negroes would strengthen the moral position of the United States.”<sup>34</sup> One *Courier* reporter, Dunbar S. McLaurin, argued that if the nation appointed a black American as its ambassador to India, it would “do more to bolster the sagging American prestige than millions of dollars in aid or relief—and knock the props from beneath most Communist argument.”<sup>35</sup> The

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<sup>30</sup> Manfred Berg, “Black Civil Rights and Liberal Anticommunism: The NAACP in the Early Cold War,” *Journal of American History* 94, no. 1 (2007): 81. See also Klinker and Smith, *The Unsteady March*, 166.

<sup>31</sup> Westad, *The Cold War*, 263.

<sup>32</sup> Slate, *Colored Cosmopolitanism*, 162.

<sup>33</sup> Slate, *Colored Cosmopolitanism*, 170.

<sup>34</sup> Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire*, 148.

<sup>35</sup> Dunbar S. McLaurin, “India Would Welcome Negro Ambassador,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, March 4, 1950, city edition.

State Department, in response to these demands and its concerns over the apparent sympathy among Indians for the plight of African Americans, sent an increasing number of black Americans to the country.<sup>36</sup> These tours provided an ideal opportunity for civil rights activists to further cultivate Indian support and to highlight for American leaders the strategic benefits of embracing civil rights. For example, Edith Sampson, an African American attorney, visited India in 1949 along with twenty-eight other notable Americans through a tour organized by the popular radio program, “America’s Town Meeting of the Air.” When asked about American race relations at an event in Delhi, Sampson replied that change was certainly needed and informed the audience that increased foreign pressure would help. “I think one of the great instruments in quickening the pace of the American white man is the report that we at the Town Hall are going to take back to white America,” she asserted. Sampson recognized that by forcing America’s leaders to confront the fact that their domestic policies were hurting their increasingly important Cold War objectives abroad, leaders could be cajoled into action. The interests of black and white America were converging; America’s leaders just needed to realize it. Indeed, Sampson argued that the United States could not forge alliances with nor win “the confidence of Asia’s dark-skinned millions, if they continue to read about discriminatory practices in America.”<sup>37</sup>

In 1949, Walter White, the president of the NAACP, also traveled to India as part of the same tour as Sampson. He likewise seized upon the opportunity to link domestic civil rights issues to the Cold War, although he found himself in a challenging position. Like many other cultural ambassadors who would travel to India, he had to restrain his criticism of the United States, lest officials in Washington cancel his funding and recall him to the United States.<sup>38</sup> This did not, however, preclude him from advancing an interest convergence strategy. Amid a volley of questions about the state of American race relations, White needed to find a way to emphasize the importance of civil rights progress to the American Cold War effort without arming the Soviet Union with additional ammunition for their propaganda campaign against the United States.<sup>39</sup> In Karachi, Pakistan, for example, White stated, “As an American Negro, I am deeply aware of the grave shortcomings of my own country so far as democracy for minorities is concerned.”<sup>40</sup> He stressed an important caveat: that “under democracy, minorities can fight against injustice. We are doing that in America, and we are making progress.”<sup>41</sup> White’s meaningful distinction has substantial relevance in the Cold War; he was not impeaching America as a nation but simply attacking racism. American democracy was special, White averred, because the former could overcome the latter. Implicit in this comment, however, was a

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<sup>36</sup> Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire*, 148; Slate, *Colored Cosmopolitanism*, 185; Plummer, *Rising Wind*, 221–2. Chester Bowles, the United States’ Ambassador to India, thought it would be helpful to hire more African Americans for the American Foreign Service. Requesting “top notch Negro Foreign Service Officers,” Bowles explained that “Indians, particularly those outside official circles in the capital, will open up much more freely to an American Negro than they will to others. It will, of course, help us to combat to a certain extent the feeling in India about the Negro problem in the U.S.” Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 59.

<sup>37</sup> Slate, *Colored Cosmopolitanism*, 185.

<sup>38</sup> Slate, *Colored Cosmopolitanism*, 187.

<sup>39</sup> Slate, *Colored Cosmopolitanism*, 173.

<sup>40</sup> Poppy Cannon, *A Gentle Knight: My Husband, Walter White* (Rinehart & Company, 1956), 119.

<sup>41</sup> Cannon, *A Gentle Knight*, 119.

demand for federal civil rights action. If White's defense of the United States was to stand, the government would need to prove to the world that progress was possible. Otherwise, the world would realize his words were nothing more than empty assurances, and the nation's Cold War interests would continue to suffer. "Until she [the U.S.] cleans up her own back yard," White remarked, "she has no right to tell others their faults."<sup>42</sup> In his comments, White trod a careful line; he made sure not to harm the nation's Cold War interests by emphasizing democracy's capacity for progress, yet he simultaneously stressed the need for progress if the United States wanted influence in the Third World.

White and Sampson were not alone in their journeys to India; many other prominent African Americans visited the budding country and used their travels to present American racism as a disadvantage to the United States in the Cold War. Carl Rowan, an African American journalist who traveled to South Asia, was struck by the near-relentless criticism of American racism that he encountered.<sup>43</sup> In 1956, Rowan published a book about his travels, *The Pitiful and the Proud*, in which he wrote that "thousands of Indians bore a deep, honest feeling of kinship for" African Americans.<sup>44</sup> Rowan continued, observing that:

There was much evidence that almost every thinking Indian was seized by this consciousness of color. To many, this concern with color had become close to an obsession and I was convinced that for many years to come race would be an important factor in India's foreign policy. Not only does the press hammer continually on racial injustices as a means of convincing Asians that they must be suspicious of the white man, but India's leading politicians often indulge in the same kind of talk. Although he certainly would deny doing it intentionally, Prime Minister Nehru often has uttered words whose effect is to convince his countrymen that "imperialism" and "white Westerner" are synonymous. Thus, race and colonialism, India's great passions, have been intricately woven together in the minds of the people.<sup>45</sup>

Rowan perceived manifest harms to the U.S.'s interests on account of racial discrimination. He, by simply acknowledging the harm done to America's reputation and foreign faith in democratic values, implicitly called on the United States to reform its practices. Through the publication of his book, Rowan brought attention to the ways in which the interests of white Americans converged with those of black Americans amid the ongoing Cold War.

When P. L. Prattis, the editor of influential black paper *The Pittsburgh Courier*, traveled to India in 1949, he displayed the vigor of Indian opposition to American racism in daily accounts published in the *Courier*. "If you think that the people over here are ignoring what is happening in the good old U.S.A.," Prattis explained, "you have another think coming. They are right on top of what's in the news in my . . . country."<sup>46</sup> In one of his travel entries, he discussed how one edition of the *Hindustan Times* contained three separate articles covering the problems of

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<sup>42</sup> Cannon, *A Gentle Knight*, 119.

<sup>43</sup> Slate, *Colored Cosmopolitanism*, 186.

<sup>44</sup> Carl T. Rowan, *The Pitiful and the Proud* (Random House, 1956), 146.

<sup>45</sup> Rowan, *The Pitiful and the Proud*, 146–47.

<sup>46</sup> P. L. Prattis, "Seventeen Days in Independent India," *Pittsburgh Courier*, October 8, 1949, city edition, 7.

American race relations.<sup>47</sup> Prattis used the Cold War to demonstrate why Indian public opinion was so important: the same paper afforded “extensive” coverage to Russia’s Pushkin Day—a celebration of Russian poet Alexander Pushkin.<sup>48</sup> “I need only remind you,” Prattis wrote, “that Pushkin, who to the Russians, is what Shakespeare is to the English, Victor Hugo to the French and Goethe to the Germans, was a Negro.”<sup>49</sup> Prattis’ point was clear: as Indian readers learned about the horrors of American racism, they simultaneously learned about the supposed triumphs of Soviet racial inclusivity.

African American author Jay Saunders Redding also widely toured India on behalf of the State Department in 1952.<sup>50</sup> Writing about his travels, he noted that “The Indian people believe that American policy is opposed to the ‘liberation and rise’ of the colored people of the world, and that the treatment of Negroes in America is a home demonstration of this.”<sup>51</sup> Indians, Redding asserted, saw American racism at home as fundamentally intertwined with imperialism. Redding did not encounter these sentiments in rare, isolated incidents; in almost every one of his conversations, his Indian counterpart brought up the issue of race in America.<sup>52</sup> “The belief is,” Redding noted, “that America is prejudiced against non-whites and that the prejudice, long documented in the disabilities under which Negroes suffer in the United States, is now expressed in American world policy.”<sup>53</sup> This was neither a moot nor academic issue, though; these sentiments had real stakes for American foreign policy—stakes which Redding made clear to his readers. “Those who do not believe in the equality of man . . . can lose us a struggle which, even for all our best technical and financial efforts,

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<sup>47</sup> The three articles on American race relations that Prattis had identified in that day’s issue of the *The Hindustan Times* were: “LATE NEWS,” *Hindustan Times* (New Delhi, India), June 7, 1949, 1; “‘Shame Washington,’” *Hindustan Times* (New Delhi, India), June 7, 1949, 8; “2 Americans Arrested For Lynching A Negro,” *Hindustan Times* (New Delhi, India), June 7, 1949, 8.

<sup>48</sup> Prattis, “Seventeen Days,” 7; Slate, *Colored Cosmopolitanism*, 176.

<sup>49</sup> Prattis, “Seventeen Days,” 7.

<sup>50</sup> Redding traveled from Bombay down the west coast to Trivandrum and then up the east coast to Calcutta. Inland, he visited Poona, Hyderabad, Mysore, Bangalore, Guntur, Cuttack, and Patna. He also visited a considerable number of villages and dozens of universities. Faith Berry, ed., *A Scholar’s Conscience: Selected Writings of J. Saunders Redding, 1942–1977* (University Press of Kentucky, 1992), 128. One might wonder why the State Department sent African American cultural ambassadors abroad, given the risk that their critiques of American race relations could fuel anti-U.S. sentiment. Ultimately, officials believed their presence helped counter negative perceptions of the U.S. See note 36. African Americans who traveled to India also knew that if they failed to remain within acceptable bounds, their funding could be revoked, and they would be forced to prematurely return to the United States.

<sup>51</sup> Berry, *Selected Writings of J. Saunders Redding*, 129. In his book recounting his journey, *An American in India*, Redding also wrote that “The Indian people believe that the United States is imperialistic, and that American designs in India are imperialistic . . . They believe that America is unalterably prejudiced against non-whites.” Jay Saunders Redding, *An American in India* (Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1954), 275.

<sup>52</sup> Berry, *Selected Writings of J. Saunders Redding*, 129. While in India, Redding met with Larry Wilson, an African American foreign service officer focusing on cultural affairs. Redding asked Wilson what issues in the United States mattered to Indians. “Well, the race issue for one,” Wilson replied. When Redding inquired as to why this topic was so important, Wilson simply stated, “We’re dealing with *colored* people in a *colored* country.” Redding, *An American in India*, 35–6.

<sup>53</sup> Berry, *Selected Writings of J. Saunders Redding*, 129. See also Redding, *An American in India*, 169–70.

will remain for some time in doubt. The Indian people are not going to be fooled by any play-acting by Americans.”<sup>54</sup> If America wanted to secure friendships in countries like India, change was needed. Like his fellow African American travelers to India, Redding seized upon the opportunity to underscore the link between civil rights and the Cold War.

On the home front, civil rights activists advanced similar arguments in support of racial progress, carefully framing them as an effort to win the Cold War, lest they appear “un-American.”<sup>55</sup> Soon after President Truman announced the Truman Doctrine—a policy aimed at containing the spread of communism by supporting free peoples resisting authoritarian regimes—White told the President that “acts of discrimination against minorities abroad were being used to discredit the United States and convince the people of the world that Americans were incurably addicted to bigotry.”<sup>56</sup> White also attempted to enlist the support of Indian American businessman Jagjit Singh; after Singh delivered a speech in May 1949, White mentioned that he “kept waiting for [him] to point out that one of the reasons for the spread of communism in China and other parts of Asia is due to the lowered prestige of the United States and faith in democracy because of discrimination in America.”<sup>57</sup> The more people that White and other civil rights leaders recruited to highlight the pitfalls of racial segregation during the Cold War, the more potent and difficult to deny their observations would become. The executive director of the NAACP, Roy Wilkins, argued that “the survival of the American democratic system in the present global conflict of ideologies depends on the strength it can muster from the minds, hearts and spiritual convictions of all its people.”<sup>58</sup> According to Wilkins, “The Negro wants change in order that he may be brought in line with the *American* standard. . . This must be done not only to preserve and strengthen that standard here at home, but to guarantee its potency in the world struggle against dictatorship.”<sup>59</sup> Echoing White, Wilkins proffered a Cold War rationale for why white America needed to pursue civil rights, one which argued that segregation was aiding the forces of “dictatorship.”<sup>60</sup>

These appeals were amplified by an active black press, which played a prominent role in highlighting and shaping conceptions of interest convergence. For example, one reporter for the *Baltimore Afro-American* wrote an article covering a statement by the president of Howard University, Mordecai Johnson, who argued that ending domestic racism would be the best defense the nation could mount against

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<sup>54</sup> Berry, *Selected Writings of J. Saunders Redding*, 130.

<sup>55</sup> Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 29; Berg, “Black Civil Rights,” 88–96. During the Cold War, civil rights activists and organizations became easy targets for anti-communists, especially since many Americans increasingly saw civil liberties as a “pink” issue. Plummer, *Rising Wind*, 194. While the Cold War enabled civil rights organizations to seize on interest convergence to advocate for change, it also limited the domain of acceptable criticism of the United States, especially during the McCarthy years. Consequently, many civil rights organizations actively distanced themselves from pre-WWII commitments to anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism as the FBI began to crack down on those it labeled as communist. The NAACP, for example, excised more radical members like W. E. B. Du Bois from its leadership. Berg, “Black Civil Rights,” 83–84; Plummer, *Rising Wind*, 194–96; Duberman, *Paul Robeson*, 297, 425–26.

<sup>56</sup> Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire*, 112.

<sup>57</sup> Slate, *Colored Cosmopolitanism*, 172.

<sup>58</sup> Roy Wilkins, “Undergirding the Democratic Ideal,” *The Crisis*, December 1951, 650.

<sup>59</sup> Wilkins, “Undergirding the Democratic Ideal,” 650–51.

<sup>60</sup> Wilkins, “Undergirding the Democratic Ideal,” 651.

Communism. According to the reporter, Johnson “attributed communism’s edge in the struggle to the discrimination against colored people by the capitalistic and imperialistic forms of government.”<sup>61</sup> Johnson argued that Britain’s “stupid blunder of treating the people of India as the United States had treated colored citizens in Alabama and Mississippi has created in India the best possible setup for communism in the world.”<sup>62</sup> If the United States wanted to foreclose the possibility of India becoming a communist stronghold—a frightening thought to American statesmen—Johnson declared the only answer was to remedy the nation’s civil rights *status quo*. American leaders needed to act upon civil rights, not just because it was right, but because the Cold War required it. Figures like Johnson recognized that the African American community’s interests could be obtained by arguing on Cold War terms—their interests had converged with those of national security. As another prominent black paper, *The Pittsburgh Courier* pointed out, crushing “Soviet lies” would not be enough—“there must be a campaign to crush Soviet truth.”<sup>63</sup> The United States could send an army of African American cultural ambassadors to India, but, as the ambassadors’ experiences laid bare, their journeys would do little to convince the Indian people of America’s sincere commitment to democratic values. Real, tangible change would be required. Furthering this argument, the *Courier* painted India’s first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, as a champion of African American civil rights, even if, in reality, his stance was more tepid.<sup>64</sup> The more that civil rights leaders could convince the American public and leadership that Indian officials were chilled in their attitudes towards America on account of race, the greater the odds that their Cold War appeals could be effective.

As civil rights leaders sought to increase international pressure on the United States, they attempted to leverage the newly constituted United Nations. In October 1947, the NAACP filed a petition with the organization titled *An Appeal to the World: A Statement on the Denial of Human Rights to Minorities in the Case of Citizens of Negro Descent in the United States of America and an Appeal to the United Nations for Redress*.<sup>65</sup> The 150-page petition, primarily authored by W.E.B. Du Bois on behalf of the NAACP, presented a stark and comprehensive history of racial discrimination

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<sup>61</sup> Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire*, 147.

<sup>62</sup> Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire*, 147. Charles S. Johnson, the president of Fisk University, told the audience of the popular radio program *America’s Town Meeting of the Air* that domestic racism was the “Achilles heel” of American foreign policy. “We are before the bar of world opinion as the chief advocate of the right of individuals to live as free men, equal before law . . . Unless we can solve our own racial problem, we cannot hope to plead successfully the cause of freedom and equality for others,” Johnson asserted. Klinker and Smith, *The Unsteady March*, 225.

<sup>63</sup> Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire*, 147.

<sup>64</sup> Slate, *Colored Cosmopolitanism*, 185; McLaurin, “India Would Welcome Negro Ambassador.” Nehru, like other Indian leaders, felt more constrained than ordinary Indians in his ability to criticize the United States, lest he harm his nation’s geopolitical interests by alienating the United States. Slate, *Colored Cosmopolitanism*, 162.

<sup>65</sup> William Edward Burghardt Du Bois, *An Appeal to the World: A Statement on the Denial of Human Rights to Minorities in the Case of Citizens of Negro Descent in the United States of America and an Appeal to the United Nations for Redress*, 1947. See also Berg, “Black Civil Rights,” 82–83; Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 44–45; Plummer, *Rising Wind*, 180–84; Slate, *Colored Cosmopolitanism*, 182; Klinker and Smith, *The Unsteady March*, 209–10.

in the United States.<sup>66</sup> The petition called upon the “Peoples of the World” to protect African Americans unprotected by the United States.<sup>67</sup> Putting the issue of civil rights squarely in the context of the Cold War, the petition argued, “It is not Russia that threaten the United States so much as Mississippi; not Stalin and Molotov but Bilbo and Rankin; internal injustice done to one’s brothers is far more dangerous than the aggression of strangers from abroad.”<sup>68</sup> The United States’ greatest liability, the petition vividly argued, lay not to the east, but to the south. Segregationist states and governors were doing more to undermine the United States’ interests abroad than Stalin himself. Cold War success, then, required domestic progress. For the Civil Rights Movement, this petition was entirely symbolic; the United Nations had no power to interfere in the internal affairs of a sovereign nation-state. The petition was nonetheless powerful. The NAACP widely publicized the document, releasing it to the press and subsequently publishing it as a booklet in early 1948.<sup>69</sup> Their efforts immediately “created an international sensation.”<sup>70</sup> The NAACP, according to Walter White, was:

flooded with requests for copies of the document, particularly from nations which were critical of the United States, including Russia, Great Britain, and the Union of South Africa. It was manifest that they were pleased to have documentary proof that the United States did not practice what it preached.<sup>71</sup>

The petition received widespread media coverage, both domestically and internationally. As the petition’s drafters had hoped, the American press recognized and conceded that the petition exposed an acute vulnerability for the nation’s international leadership, security, and influence in the intensifying Cold War.<sup>72</sup>

For *An Appeal to the World* to receive a hearing before the United Nations, the NAACP needed a member-state to sponsor the petition.<sup>73</sup> Before officially submitting the petition, White had circulated a draft to Vijayalakshmi Pandit, the sister of Nehru and the head of the Indian delegation to the United Nations. Pandit replied, “I shall certainly do what I can to help you place this before the Assembly of the United Nations or the Economic and Social Council.”<sup>74</sup> Once the petition was formally submitted, the Indian press played a major role in publicizing it across India. One NAACP official, Hugh Smythe, reported that “a representative for a chain of sixteen Indians newspapers had obtained the petition with a promise of reporting it and the event in the local papers of his chain in India.”<sup>75</sup> Although White, believing that the utility of the petition had been realized and that further action would harm their

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<sup>66</sup> Du Bois, much like Robeson, was a figure at the forefront of black internationalism; Du Bois named the problem of the twentieth century as the problem of the color line. In 1928, Du Bois published *Dark Princess: A Romance*, a novel that explored international racial solidarity, particularly between people of color in the United States and India. William Edward Burghardt Du Bois, *Dark Princess: A Romance* (Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1928). For a discussion of *Dark Princess*, see Madhumita Lahiri, “WORLD ROMANCE: Genre, Internationalism, and W. E. B. Du Bois,” *Callaloo* 33, no. 2 (2010): 539–40.

<sup>67</sup> Du Bois, “An Appeal to the World”; Berg, “Black Civil Rights,” 82.

<sup>68</sup> Du Bois, “An Appeal to the World”; Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 44; Berg, “Black Civil Rights,” 83; Klinker and Smith, *The Unsteady March*, 209.

<sup>69</sup> Berg, “Black Civil Rights,” 82.

<sup>70</sup> Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 44.

<sup>71</sup> Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 44.

<sup>72</sup> Berg, “Black Civil Rights,” 82.

<sup>73</sup> Plummer, *Rising Wind*, 182.

<sup>74</sup> Slate, *Colored Cosmopolitanism*, 182.

<sup>75</sup> Slate, *Colored Cosmopolitanism*, 182.

objectives, chose to withdraw the petition, its effect was palpable.<sup>76</sup> A Dalit leader in Bombay wrote a letter to Du Bois suggesting that the document had a significant influence on people in India.<sup>77</sup> Inside Truman's White House, the petition likewise proved incredibly potent. Attorney General Tom Clark admitted that he had been "humiliated" by the petition, to which he responded by expanding the Department of Justice's civil rights section.<sup>78</sup> The NAACP's stunt had proved incredibly successful, cultivating further support in Third World nations like India and embarrassing the United States on the world stage. Many Americans were now forced to confront the reality that segregation at home could harm their interests abroad.

As African American leaders sought to internationalize their civil rights struggle, they found a receptive audience in the Indian press, which carefully followed and reported on issues of American racial injustice. In early 1951, for example, when seven black Americans were sentenced for allegedly raping a white woman, Indian observers were outraged with what they viewed as a double standard. "Since no white man [in Virginia] had been convicted of raping a Negro woman," articles generally argued, "a country which boasts of democratic freedom should first set an example of that freedom within its own boundary and then come out with the mission of establishing liberty, equality and fraternity throughout the world."<sup>79</sup> Indian observers acutely perceived the inconsistencies between American rhetoric and its racial reality. The editor of *Allahabad Leader* captured the general sentiment of Indian criticism against American practices in a 1948 article: "The prevailing racist spirit in the U.S.A. is not consistent with America's claim to the moral leadership of the world."<sup>80</sup> A North Indian newspaper similarly remarked that the United States should enroll in a "refresher course in the truths which General Jefferson [*sic*] once held to be self-evident."<sup>81</sup> American action was inconsistent with its foundational democratic principles. The paper, *The Delhi Express*, went on to say that "the best antidote to Soviet Communism . . . is to deprive it of propagandist materials based on political colonization, foreign economic control and racial discrimination."<sup>82</sup> One Indian writer in *The Times of India* admonished that "[i]f America and Britain are anxious to range the people of Asia and Africa on their side, it is high time they forget these prejudices, at home and abroad"—America's leadership of the free world depended on it.<sup>83</sup> The increasing intensity with which the Indian press focused on these issues demonstrates one way in which African Americans had helped converge their interests with those of white policymakers who were eager to win over India as an ally.<sup>84</sup>

Officials in the federal government could no longer deny that domestic civil rights issues presented a serious Cold War liability. Chester Bowles, the American ambassador to India from 1951 to 1953, for example, repeatedly argued to

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<sup>76</sup> Berg, "Black Civil Rights," 83; Plummer, *Rising Wind*, 184.

<sup>77</sup> Plummer, *Rising Wind*, 184.

<sup>78</sup> Plummer, *Rising Wind*, 182–83; Klinker and Smith, *The Unsteady March*, 210.

<sup>79</sup> Frenise A. Logan, "Racism and Indian-U.S. Relations, 1947–1953: Views in the Indian Press," *Pacific Historical Review* 54, no. 1 (1985): 74.

<sup>80</sup> Logan, "Racism and Indian-U.S. Relations," 73.

<sup>81</sup> Logan, "Racism and Indian-U.S. Relations," 74.

<sup>82</sup> Logan, "Racism and Indian-U.S. Relations," 74.

<sup>83</sup> "Betraying a Trust," *Times of India*, June 28, 1952, 6.

<sup>84</sup> When India's Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, visited the United States in 1949, the Indian press attacked him harshly for not allotting time to meet with African American leaders. After his official visit ended, he decided to remain in the country to meet with Black leaders. "The Indian press and public opinion were in large part responsible for the emergence of Nehru as a forthright critic of U.S. race relations." Plummer, *Rising Wind*, 219.

Washington that racism at home was undercutting their efforts abroad. In a 1952 speech at Yale University, Bowles stated:

A year, a month, or a week in Asia is enough to convince any perceptive American that the colored peoples of Asia and Africa, who total two-thirds of the world's population, seldom think about the United States without considering the limitations under which our 13 million Negroes are living.

According to Bowles, a vast majority of Africans and Asians were “convinced that, solely because of their color, many Americans are denied a full share in life of the richest nation on earth, and in their ears this conviction gives our claim to world leadership a distinctly hollow ring.” Bowles then asked: “[C]an any of us say they are wrong?”<sup>85</sup> No audience member at Yale nor federal official in Washington could—the truth was irrefutable. During the early Cold War years, an unfathomable, almost obsessive, volume of cable traffic from U.S. diplomatic stations around the Third World poured into Washington; the transmissions often summarized or transcribed local news articles expressing hostility to America for no reason other than its civil rights inaction.<sup>86</sup> Recognizing that the nation’s “moral legitimacy” was under attack, President Truman began using his executive power to advance the ball on civil rights, even if slowly, by creating a President’s Committee on Civil Rights and desegregating the armed forces.<sup>87</sup>

By the mid-1950s, African American civil rights activists had accomplished two significant and interrelated goals. First, they had meaningfully caused their interests to converge with those of white, Cold War-focused policymakers in the American government. Second, they had forced those same policymakers to recognize this convergence. Federal officials had no choice but to start supporting civil rights, even if tacitly. Civil rights activists had loaded their weapons; with *Brown v. Board* about to come before the Supreme Court, an opportunity to fire it would soon present itself.

### ***Converging on Brown***

With *Brown v. Board of Education* pending before the Supreme Court of the United States, the NAACP and its allied third-party *amici curiae* worked hard to depict the case to the court as one with immense international significance—to highlight the interests that civil rights activists had worked so hard over the last decade to converge.<sup>88</sup> In their brief to the Court, the NAACP argued that the insidious doctrine

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<sup>85</sup> Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 77.

<sup>86</sup> Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 81.

<sup>87</sup> President's Committee on Civil Rights, *To Secure These Rights*, December 1947; Executive Order No. 9981, 13 Fed. Reg. 4313 (July 28, 1948); Skrentny, “The Effect of the Cold War,” 240; Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 79–114; Klinker and Smith, *The Unsteady March*, 214. The Department of Justice also began filing briefs in civil rights cases before the Supreme Court. For a fuller, more focused account of how federal officials realized that civil rights issues bore significance in the Cold War, see, *inter alia*, Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*; Dudziak, “Brown as a Cold War Case”; Dudziak, “Desegregation as a Cold War Imperative”; Skrentny, “The Effect of the Cold War”; Klarman, “Brown, Racial Change, and the Civil Rights Movement,” 26–29.

<sup>88</sup> Prior to WWII, the federal government had never filed an *amicus* brief with the Supreme Court in a civil rights case between private litigants—they lacked the concrete interest requisite for such a submission. The dawn of the Cold War, however, not only provided officials with an interest in the outcome but also necessitated that they act. Citing concrete geopolitical

of “separate but equal” undermined the values the nation had built during the twentieth century: “fighting racism at home and abroad.”<sup>89</sup> The American Veterans Committee argued in their brief that the Court should outlaw segregation in public education because “its continuance is detrimental to our national welfare, both at home and abroad.”<sup>90</sup> Many of the committee’s members had fought overseas in World War II; to them, segregation violated the core “democratic principles” in support of which they had so valiantly risked their lives.<sup>91</sup> Many briefs echoed the interest convergence arguments that civil rights organizations had cultivated: that blatant racism directly harmed the nation’s ability to wage—and win—the Cold War. In their *amicus* brief, the American Federation of Teachers made the interest convergence dynamics at play clear for the justices:

The United States, in the cold war with Soviet Russia and its satellites is disturbed by the “neutralism” of India and other sections of the darker world. The factor of color has as dominate part in this neutralism as the unwillingness to be drawn into a conflict between these powers. Constantly in the U.N. and in the press of these countries there is pointed out the gap between our professions of democracy and our practice in so far as people of color are concerned. In so far as we eliminate among our citizens barriers based on race and color, to that degree we are helping to create a “more perfect union here” and a reservoir of good will for us in the vast world of color.<sup>92</sup>

This connection between domestic racial practices and foreign affairs was not novel. To informed Americans attuned to foreign affairs and politics, this argument sounded familiar. Civil rights organizations had worked tirelessly to cultivate this narrative and inform the American public of its significance. The NAACP highlighted for the Court the national security implications of *Brown*: the “[s]urvival of our country in the present international situation is inevitably tied to resolution of this domestic issue.”<sup>93</sup>

Segregation, the parties continued, fueled Soviet propaganda mills and undermined the nation’s influence on the world stage. As the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) averred, “Legally imposed segregation in our country, in any shape, manner or form, weakens our program to build and strengthen world democracy and combat totalitarianism.”<sup>94</sup> The Cold War was “an ideological world conflict in which

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concerns, Justice Department officials entered into the civil rights fray at the Supreme Court. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 90–91; Richard Kluger, *Simple Justice: The History of Brown V. Board of Education and Black America’s Struggle for Equality* (Alfred A Knopf, 2004), 250.

<sup>89</sup> Brief for Appellants in Nos. 1, 2 and 4 and for Respondents in No. 10 on Rearmament at 31, *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954), reprinted in *Landmark Briefs*, *supra* note 3, 49: 544.

<sup>90</sup> Brief for American Veterans Committee, Inc as Amicus Curiae at 2, *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954), reprinted in *Landmark Briefs*, *supra* note 3, 49: 246.

<sup>91</sup> Brief for the Veterans Committee, *supra* note 93, at 1–2, reprinted in *Landmark Briefs*, *supra* note 3, 49: 245–6.

<sup>92</sup> Brief for American Federation of Teachers as Amicus Curiae at 25-26, *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954), reprinted in *Landmark Briefs*, *supra* note 3, 49A: 425–26.

<sup>93</sup> Brief for the NAACP, *supra* note 92, at 194, reprinted in *Landmark Briefs*, *supra* note 3, 49: 707.

<sup>94</sup> Brief for American Civil Liberties Union, American Ethical Union, American Jewish Committee, Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith, Japanese American Citizens League, and the Unitarian Fellowship for Social Justice as Amicus Curiae at 31, *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954), reprinted in *Landmark Briefs*, *supra* note 3, 49: 186.

the practices of our democracy are the subject of close scrutiny abroad.”<sup>95</sup> “We cannot afford,” the ACLU contended, “nor will the world permit us, to rest upon democratic pretensions unrelated to reality.”<sup>96</sup> If for no other reason, equality under law was required by the Cold War. Such a decision would prove “to millions in Asia and Africa that the United States is willing to give more than lip service to the principles on which it is founded.”<sup>97</sup> Rather than the Supreme Court independently sensing a convergence of their interests with those of segregation’s challengers, civil rights groups themselves deliberately and explicitly presented an interest convergence argument to the nation’s highest court. Their logic proved so persuasive that even the Department of Justice, under pressure from the NAACP, joined the case to support their position.<sup>98</sup>

The degree to which these interest convergence arguments influenced the thinking of the justices is a tough question to empirically answer; the Court’s final decision makes no explicit reference to the Cold War or the national security imperatives cited by the challengers.<sup>99</sup> Then again, the inclusion of Cold War policy statements in the Court’s opinion would not only have been unkosher but also would have undermined its effectiveness as a Cold War weapon. If America was trying to prove its democratic credentials to the world, then simply stating that equality was an American constitutional principle would produce a more convincing opinion, one which the government could subsequently broadcast and publicize around the world.<sup>100</sup> Despite this uncertainty, based upon the briefs submitted to the Court, the justices’ travels, and their related remarks, it is safe to say that the nine members of the Court were individually aware of the significance domestic civil rights issues bore in the ongoing Cold War, in no small part due to the efforts of civil rights activists.

In 1950, four years before the Court’s decision in *Brown*, Justice William O. Douglas had traveled to India, where he observed firsthand the interplay between domestic racial issues and the nation’s foreign policy. The first question asked at Douglas’ first press conference in New Delhi was “Why does America tolerate the lynching of Negroes?”<sup>101</sup> Reflecting on his travels in his 1951 book, *Strange Lands and Friendly People*, Douglas observed that in India, “color consciousness is a major influence in domestic and foreign affairs. The treatment of colored peoples by other nations is an important consideration in the warmth of India’s relations to the outside world.” Civil rights activists had helped to cultivate such strong solidarity with Indians that Douglas could not help but conclude that “The attitude of the United States toward its colored minorities is a powerful factor in our relations with India.” Douglas notes

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<sup>95</sup> Brief for the ACLU, *supra* note 97, at 28, reprinted in *Landmark Briefs*, *supra* note 3, 49: 183.

<sup>96</sup> Brief for the ACLU, *supra* note 97, at 28, reprinted in *Landmark Briefs*, *supra* note 3, 49: 183.

<sup>97</sup> Brief for the American Federation of Teachers, *supra* note 95, at 26, reprinted in *Landmark Briefs*, *supra* note 3, 49A: 426.

<sup>98</sup> Brief for the United States as Amicus Curiae, *supra* note 3, at 4–8, reprinted in *Landmark Briefs*, *supra* note 3, 49: 119–23. While *Shelley v. Kraemer* was pending before the Supreme Court, Walter White urged U.S. Attorney General Tom C. Clark to file a brief supporting the NAACP’s position, citing Truman’s pro-civil rights statements. Despite growing pressure from civil rights groups, Clark and Solicitor General Philip Perlman hesitated until Truman’s Committee on Civil Rights released its report calling for federal action on civil rights due to, in part, Cold War considerations. Kluger, *Simple Justice*, 250–52.

<sup>99</sup> *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).

<sup>100</sup> Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 104.

<sup>101</sup> William O. Douglas, *Strange Lands and Friendly People* (Harper & Brothers, 1951), 296.

that he was particularly struck by a 1949 speech delivered in New Delhi by Chicago black civil rights activist Edith Sampson. She asserted that, while she would fight for civil rights at home, she would not endure civil rights criticism abroad because African Americans had advanced further in the previous eight years “than any similar group in the entire world.” According to Douglas, her speech “created more good will and understanding in India than any other single act by any American.”<sup>102</sup> Douglas appreciated Sampson’s speech because he recognized that in the Cold War, “It is ideas that will win, not dollars.”<sup>103</sup> The victor would be determined by who could cultivate goodwill with the people of the Third World. “Neither wealth nor might will determine the outcome of the struggles in Asia. They will turn on emotional factors too subtle to measure. *Political alliances of an enduring nature will be built not on the power of guns or dollars, but on affection.*”<sup>104</sup>

The next year, Douglas embarked on a Himalayan trek during which he became increasingly concerned with the power of communist ideas in Asia—a very real consequence of domestic racism on American interests abroad. In Peshawar, Pakistan, Douglas had a conversation with a man he called a “Mongol prince.” The man told Douglas that the Soviet Union would win the contest for Asia because it was not a competition that would be decided by economic, technological, and military might alone. “America has the wealth and the military power,” the man stated. “Russia has the ideas.” When Douglas asked the man what ideas he thought that Russia had, the man replied with a telling answer: “Ideas of liberty.” Through his trips to India and the Himalayas, Douglas witnessed the effects of domestic segregation on the attitudes of people in strategically important Asian countries.<sup>105</sup>

Chief Justice Earl Warren similarly appreciated the diplomatic significance of civil rights progress, or the lack thereof. To both Douglas and Warren, the Cold War was a war of ideas. Warren, in a June 1954 speech to the judges of the United States Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, said that what was needed in the world was “a sense of justice instead of a sense of might.” By helping America live up to its ideals—to be a just society—Warren told the judges that “you and I can make our contribution to justice at home and peace in the world.” Speaking to the American Bar Association later that year, Warren emphasized that:

[o]ur American system like all others is on trial both at home and abroad. The way it works; the manner in which it solves the problems of the day; the extent to which we maintain the spirit of our Constitution with its Bill of Rights, will in the long run do more to make it both secure and the object of adulation than the number of hydrogen bombs we stockpile.

World peace, Warren stated, “will be accomplished through ideas rather than armaments; through a sense of justice and mutual friendships rather than with guns and bombs and guided missiles.” Only by living up to the American ideal could the nation win the “contest for the hearts and minds of people.” Chief Justice Warren, the author of *Brown*, clearly recognized the power that his judicial opinions could have around the world.<sup>106</sup>

Warren and Douglas were not the only Supreme Court justices to appreciate the international significance of Supreme Court decisions. Justice Hugo Black once

<sup>102</sup> Douglas, *Strange Lands*, 296.

<sup>103</sup> Douglas, *Strange Lands*, 321.

<sup>104</sup> Douglas, *Strange Lands*, 326.

<sup>105</sup> William O. Douglas, *Beyond the High Himalayas* (Doubleday & Company, 1952), 321.

<sup>106</sup> “Text of Warren Speech at Bar ‘Home’ Dedication,” *New York Times*, August 20, 1954. See also Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 105–06.

cautioned against airing “dirty linen” when “‘softer blows’ yielded the same results without displaying ugly facts that enemies abroad could use ‘to do us harm.’”<sup>107</sup> Justice Felix Frankfurter and former Secretary of State Dean Acheson, whose comments on the harms domestic segregation posed to the nation’s interests were quoted at length in the Justice Department’s brief in *Brown*, were close friends.<sup>108</sup> Given the volume of the briefing in *Brown* that emphasized how domestic civil rights inaction posed a Cold War liability to the nation, it is hard to imagine that these considerations were not on the minds of each of the justices.

One scholar has argued that the unanimity of *Brown*—important for displaying to the world America’s genuine commitment to civil rights and for upholding the legitimacy of the decision—was a consequence of these Cold War calculations.<sup>109</sup> After the arguments in *Brown* concluded, Justice Stanley Reed, an avid segregationist and judicial conservative, remained unwilling to declare public school segregation unconstitutional.<sup>110</sup> According to one of Reed’s law clerks, the Cold War and the nation’s role in the world had been causing the justice “much thought.”<sup>111</sup> Less than ten days before the *Brown* opinion was to be released, Chief Justice Warren visited Reed’s chambers and asked him whether he thought a divided opinion was “really the best thing for the country.”<sup>112</sup> Reed admitted that “the attitudes of the rest of the world toward segregation [were] worthy of consideration.”<sup>113</sup> Ten days later, the Court issued its unanimous ruling—Reed had changed his vote. It was a change sparked not by a moral or legal awakening, but by careful consideration of the nation’s geopolitical interests in the Cold War. For at least some committed segregationists, national security interests in an intensifying Cold War had to take precedence.

### *Conclusion*

In 1956, President Eisenhower sent Chief Justice Warren on a goodwill tour of India. When he arrived, he needed no introduction. As the vice-chancellor of Delhi University explained, Warren “rose to fame in 28 minutes of that Monday afternoon as he read out his momentous decision outlawing racial segregation in American public schools.”<sup>114</sup> Warren had become internationally renowned for his authorship of *Brown*. In many ways, though, the decision’s real authors were the hundreds of African Americans who crystallized the Cold War imperative for civil rights reform.

The role of Cold War interest convergence in shaping civil rights progress has been well documented by scholars such as Bell and Dudziak. Yet, as Driver and others have cautioned, reducing civil rights progress to the byproduct of geopolitical pressures risks obscuring the powerful agency of civil rights activists themselves. This article aims to reconcile these perspectives, demonstrating that, while interest convergence played a significant role in compelling federal action on civil rights, black leaders were not simply passive beneficiaries of this reality—they actively

<sup>107</sup> J. Woodford Howard, Jr., *Mr. Justice Murphy: A Political Biography* (Princeton University Press, 1968), 354.

<sup>108</sup> Klinker and Smith, *The Unsteady March*, 238.

<sup>109</sup> Bergin, “Authenticating American Democracy.”

<sup>110</sup> Bergin, “Authenticating American Democracy,” 411.

<sup>111</sup> John D. Fasset, *New Deal Justice: The Life of Stanley Reed of Kentucky* (Vantage Press, 1994), 571.

<sup>112</sup> Bergin, “Authenticating American Democracy,” 429. *See also* Fasset, *New Deal*, 571–72.

<sup>113</sup> Bergin, “Authenticating American Democracy,” 429.

<sup>114</sup> Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 109.

engineered it. At a time when Cold War considerations reigned supreme, black leaders asserted their agency by highlighting the inconsistency between the United States' egalitarian rhetoric and its racial reality, reframing civil rights progress as a Cold War necessity. Their unrelenting efforts altered the calculus of America's highest leaders and turned the tide of social progress in their favor.

While their work helped to make *Brown* a reality, it certainly did not end there. The Civil Rights Movement continued to employ Cold War interest convergence over the next decade and would, in the process, rewrite the very definition of American democracy for those at home and around the world. Recognizing this dynamic challenges us to move beyond binary debates over structure versus agency. Instead, it compels us to appreciate the complex and often deliberately cultivated interplay between geopolitical realities and grassroots activism—an interplay that not only defined the Civil Rights Movement but continues to shape struggles for justice today.

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INTERPRETING MEDIA PERSPECTIVES:  
Analyzing American Responses to Kristallnacht through  
the Reporting Practices of Two North Carolina  
Newspapers  
Jacob Margolis

*In reporting on Kristallnacht, the press transmitted to the American public firsthand,  
unimpeachable evidence of what it meant to be a Jew in Nazi Germany.*

—Deborah Lipstadt, American Historian & Diplomat

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*This paper explores how two Durham, North Carolina-based newspapers—The Durham Morning Herald and The Durham Sun—responded to the events of Kristallnacht, in which Jewish businesses, homes, and places of worship across Germany were raided and destroyed on November 9th and 10th, 1938. In analyzing the content of the articles produced by these papers in conjunction with broader themes pertaining to the ways American newspapers responded to these events, this research uncovers the respective levels of isolationist rhetoric embedded within each newspaper’s respective pattern of practice. Additionally, my research makes several inquiries into other potential interpretations of the way these media outlets reported. Taking into consideration the context of Durham’s Jewish community and the observable tendencies in each newspaper’s previous publications, this paper draws connections to develop a comprehensive framework through which we can begin to understand how, and perhaps why, these newspapers described these events as they did. Using these findings, we may begin to develop a better appreciation of why newspapers across America—and even within a single city—reported on the same events in vastly different ways.*

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The diversity of journalistic expression is one of the hallmarks of a country that prides itself on its citizens' inalienable right to free speech. Indeed, within the context of American newspapers, singular events can be interpreted in vastly differing ways by varied news outlets—one need not look further than modern debates on misinformation to understand this phenomenon. Such a pattern of individual expression can be observed in the way that American newspapers reported on the events of Jewish persecution during World War II.

Through a close analysis of the content and context of newspaper articles that responded to the persecution of the Jews in Nazi Germany, this project generates informed assumptions about what types of convictions and ulterior motives may have driven these papers' reporting practices. It does just that in looking at how the *Durham Morning Herald* and the *Durham Sun* reported on Kristallnacht. In dissecting these two papers that operated out of the same city, and by analyzing their respective patterns of practice in the way they referenced, elaborated on, and drew conclusions from the events of Kristallnacht, this project shows the degree to which papers—even those situated in the same city and using the same wire services—can tremendously vary in practice. By uncovering the subliminal messaging embedded in these articles, this work draws compelling and complex conclusions about where—and perhaps even why—these papers differed, both from one another and from those of prevailing popularity in larger cities across the nation, in their reporting on Kristallnacht and its aftermath.

The *Herald* and the *Sun* are worthy of analysis in their own right, as their geographic proximity to one another allows this project to generate compelling comparisons between the two papers' reporting practices. This, in turn, allows us to determine if local contexts impacted the papers in similar ways or if the papers maintained distinctive reporting practices that only shared *some* of the same features. The papers are also distinctive within the greater body of historical inquiry on this topic because of the relatively little focus that newspapers in the American South have received from scholars like Deborah Lipstadt, whose work this project references at length. However, perhaps the most unique quality of these two papers is their shared ownership: in 1929, the *Durham Morning Herald* acquired the *Durham Sun*.

<sup>1</sup> Thus, though these two newspapers had distinctive writers and editors, they shared the same corporate leadership, making it more likely that their reporting practices would mirror one another. Given this context, the *Herald* and the *Sun* offer a unique case study. When analyzing other newspapers, it is difficult to pinpoint whether the source of influence on reporting practices stems from internal (i.e., editorial or corporate) influences or external (i.e., local, national, and social) ones. However, for the *Herald* and the *Sun*, it's reasonable to assume that differences in reporting practices are not due to company oversight and must stem from something else.

What we will come to discover through our analysis of the reports in the *Herald* and the *Sun* is that these papers posted reactions to Kristallnacht which were similar to those of other outlets. As scholar Deborah Lipstadt describes, "For over three weeks following the outbreak, eyewitness reports from Germany could be found on the front pages of numerous papers. Practically no American newspaper, irrespective of size, circulation, location, or political inclination failed to condemn Germany."<sup>2</sup> This project's findings unquestionably support this notion. However, these two Durham

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<sup>1</sup> Maie El-Sourady and Philip McFee, "Durham Herald-Sun," NCpedia, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Deborah Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief: The American Press And The Coming Of The Holocaust 1933–1945*. (Free Press, 1993), 172.

publications reflected another trend amongst American papers, and each in their own ways: “the press did not only condemn; once again it sought rational explanations for this apparently senseless course of events.”<sup>3</sup> Through this effort, papers from across the country came to varying conclusions about why these events transpired. Some felt the riots were a sign of an embedded weakness in Nazi control and governance over the country’s citizenry. Some saw it as a strength. Particularly isolationist papers admonished the attacks as the outcome of Britain’s “misguided policies” and inability to act.<sup>4</sup>

As this project will exemplify, the *Herald* and *Sun* came to their own distinct conclusions, but which appeared similar to those made in other cities. For the former, the editors seemed to possess a rare comprehension of the level of organization that contextualized these riots. Through their reporting in the aftermath of Kristallnacht, they exemplified a contempt for Nazi government informed by this fundamental understanding. At the same time, the paper reflected the growing concern over U.S. involvement in Europe through its use of isolationist rhetoric. The paper’s specific emphasis on how American church officials were responding to the events was particularly unique and indicates what type of information was valued by the editors at the *Herald*. For the *Sun*, the editors similarly pushed back against Joseph Goebbels’ notion that the riots of Kristallnacht were not organized, an equally rare demonstration of the paper’s accurate interpretation of government involvement in the riots. Despite this noticeable similarity, however, the *Sun* diverged from the *Herald* in its less blatant—and often complete lack of—isolationism, in many instances quoting Nazi officials in their disdain for “international Jewry” and the regime’s disapproval of foreign comment on the domestic Jewish persecution, unwilling to shy away from these tensions when reporting.

The variance of perspectives and reporting practices within a city as comparatively small as Durham helps us to recognize that the way American newspapers interpreted reports from overseas atrocities could not be reduced to a singular, agreeable narrative. Rather, the American people received varying analyses that uniquely shaped public opinion to bring the country to a united front in opposition to Nazi rule and Jewish persecution, but which came to such an opinion by way of variable conclusions—and which had the potential to inspire fear, nationalism, and confusion all at once. Additionally, this variety of opinion included an equally diverse spectrum of anxiety as it pertained to the urgency with which Americans felt responsible for responding to and aiding the ailing Jewish population in Europe. The main factors involved in this urgency to respond, or more often the lack thereof, included isolationism and anti-immigration sentiment.

To fully understand how the *Herald* and the *Sun* were outgrowths of political and societal sentiment, we should briefly review what isolationism meant to the U.S. in the 1930s. As Charles Kupchan puts it, “the main U.S. policy response to Europe’s strategic descent during the second half of the 1930s was to embargo trade with belligerents to avoid a replay of the chain of events that brought the country into World War I.”<sup>5</sup> One such policy, the Ludlow Amendment, was on the House floor in 1938, the same year in which the events of Kristallnacht played out.<sup>6</sup> Introduced in 1935 by Indiana Democrat Louis Ludlow, the constitutional amendment would have required

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<sup>3</sup> Deborah Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief*, 173.

<sup>4</sup> Deborah Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief*, 175.

<sup>5</sup> Charles A. Kupchan, *Isolationism: A History of America’s Efforts to Shield Itself from the World* (Oxford University Press, 2020), 275.

<sup>6</sup> Charles A. Kupchan, *Isolationism*, 275.

any declaration of war to receive the approval of the populace via referendum before going into effect.<sup>7</sup> As Kupchan put it, “the debate over the Ludlow Amendment during the second half of the 1930s made clear just how fully elites and the public alike had embraced isolationist attitudes.”<sup>8</sup> Aside from efforts by members of Congress to block declarations of war on other nations, opinion surveys from this time supported such sentiments as well, with one demonstrating that roughly 75% of Americans supported the amendment.<sup>9</sup> If we are to consider these political and societal sentiments in conjunction with the articles produced by the two media outlets of focus, we will see that journalism was likely affected by this popular sentiment. As previously mentioned, this phenomenon manifested itself in a strong isolationist sentiment in the articles produced by the *Durham Morning Herald* and a present but more subtle capacity in the *Durham Sun*. Citing specific portions of the text from articles at each of these outlets, this paper will demonstrate the phenomenon in action.

Now, briefly turning to the impact of anti-immigration feelings across the country, we can similarly track how those developments impacted journalistic expression. Beginning one decade earlier, isolationism and anti-immigration went hand-in-hand: “In the 1920s, the United States imposed immigration quotas based on country of origin, leading to a dramatic decrease in arrivals of Catholics and Jews from southeastern Europe in favor of Protestants from the north. The isolationism of the interwar era went hand in hand with anti-immigrant sentiment, reinforcing the aversion to foreign entanglement.”<sup>10</sup> Though it does not appear as clearly as the isolationist rhetoric that pervades the *Herald* and the *Sun*, anti-immigration feeling is entangled in the former, and thus it cannot be ignored as a potential byproduct in both papers.

### Historiography

Throughout the following sections, this paper will reference Deborah Lipstadt, who observes in her seminal work, *Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust*, that papers like the *Christian Science Monitor* and *Chicago Tribune* differed considerably in how they reported on events taking place in Nazi Germany. For example, “the *Christian Science Monitor* seemed particularly intent on describing life in Germany as ‘normal and serene,’”<sup>11</sup> whereas the *Tribune* adopted a persona as an “isolationist” paper.<sup>12</sup> Despite their seemingly different tones and outlooks, both newspapers maintained the belief that, as the *Monitor* put it, “power tempers the Chancellor’s ready tongue,” and that Hitler would soon relax his rule.<sup>13</sup> In this way, it was possible for American papers to simultaneously agree in their predictions about the potential consequences of world issues, yet formulate different patterns of practice in the way they presented their content to readers.

Lipstadt’s analysis of hundreds of newspapers provides readers with insights into the unique role that these papers played in acting as a one-way mirror of editorial opinion: receiving information transmitted from foreign wire services—mainly the Associated Press—through information exchange and imposing their own methods of reporting that information, thus projecting their own biases onto American public

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<sup>7</sup> Charles A. Kupchan, *Isolationism*, 275.

<sup>8</sup> Charles A. Kupchan, *Isolationism*, 276.

<sup>9</sup> Charles A. Kupchan, *Isolationism*, 276.

<sup>10</sup> Charles A. Kupchan, *Isolationism*, 143–144.

<sup>11</sup> Deborah Lipstadt. *Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust 1933–1945* (Free Press, 1993), 66.

<sup>12</sup> Deborah Lipstadt. *Beyond Belief*, 91.

<sup>13</sup> Deborah Lipstadt. *Beyond Belief*, 91.

opinion. We might be inclined to judge these practices as inherently non-objective, especially in a profession where such standards might be expected. Certainly, such a critique may be well-evidenced, and if so, the ramifications are damning for our understanding of the motivating factors behind *specific* newspapers' decisions to present information in differing ways, as well as our current perception of how newspapers convey consequential international events.<sup>14</sup>

On the point of objectivity in journalism, we must take a step back to consider when and how this idea developed. In doing this, we may better understand where the *Herald* and the *Sun* diverged from such standards. The history of objectivity in journalism, as Peter Galison puts it in *Objectivity in Science: New Perspectives from Science and Technology Studies*, could more aptly be characterized by a conglomeration of "histories,"<sup>15</sup> in which the term's meaning has shifted across decades. For our analysis, we should concern ourselves with how objective reporting was understood in newsrooms around 1938, when the "night of broken glass" took place. As Galison explains,

World War I had subjected reporters to tremendous pressure to follow government bulletins, propaganda, and censorship. Emerging from the war, newspaper men and women looked to science for a model of objectivity at just the moment the journalists were most shaken in their faith that it could be achieved. Put shortly: after the Great War, scientists began to supplement mechanical objectivity with trained judgment; journalists simultaneously entered the discourse of objectivity and launched a drive that has never ceased to guard a place for interpretation.<sup>16</sup>

Thus, we should understand that, at the time, journalistic objectivity left room for creative expression and failed to embrace a uniformity of practice across the profession. We may be inclined to view the *Durham Morning Herald* and the *Durham Sun* as fitting within this definition. However, as far as "creative expression" is concerned, this weak framework for categorizing objectivity in a journalistic context leaves room for us to raise questions to the contrary. This gray area, in which journalistic practice teeters on the balance beam of objectivity constructed by Galison's research, is precisely what this paper will engage with throughout the following sections. To round out our understanding of this phenomenon, however, we must also consider what is meant by the "profession" of journalism, to which this standard of objectivity has been applied.

To answer this question, we can turn to the scholarship of Stephen Banning, who analyzes the origins of the professionalization of journalism in the nineteenth century.<sup>17</sup> In the 1930s, journalism was not widely considered a "profession," though

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<sup>14</sup> Sukhjeet Sahni, "Coverage of foreign news by the United States media: A study of perception of bias amongst the international students at West Virginia University," (master's thesis, West Virginia University, 2003), ProQuest 1415032. I emphasize "international events" in this instance to denote a difference between reporting on local versus overseas events. As Sahni puts it, "If news helps sell a newspaper's bottom line, it tends to be the lead story. Local news does that, so local tops every editor's list." However, in a time when international news was highly sought after, reporting on Kristallnacht was a practice that appeared across many newspapers that fit in that general trend. Hence, though even today local news captures the attention of area-specific audiences, especially for comparatively smaller outlets, the takeaways that we glean should likely only be applied to U.S. reporting on international stories.

<sup>15</sup> Peter Galison, "The Journalist, the Scientist, and Objectivity," in *Objectivity in Science: New Perspectives from Science and Technology Studies*, ed. Flavia Padovani, Alan W. Richardson, and Jonathan Y. Tsou (Springer, 2015), 57–75.

<sup>16</sup> Peter Galison, "The Journalist, the Scientist, and Objectivity," 73.

<sup>17</sup> Stephen A. Banning, "The Professionalization of Journalism: A Nineteenth-Century Beginning," *Journalism History* 24, no. 4 (1998, 1999): 157–163.

some scholars have attempted to argue that a “process” of professionalization began in the nineteenth century.<sup>18</sup> Thus, by 1938, journalism was somewhere on the scale of professionalization, though perhaps not fully realized, and likely had some forms of industry standards, of which the notion of non-objectivity might arguably contradict. These clarifications of definitions are necessary if we are to step out of our modern perception of these phenomena and into the period that we are analyzing. Simply put, such considerations are important to keep in mind throughout the analysis of the following newspaper articles. As we consider stepping into the past, we must also make note of the presence of Jews in Durham during this time, as well as the production of cigarettes by the British-American Tobacco Company, and how each of these realities may have affected local perspectives on both the persecution of Jews and Anglo-German conflict as a whole.

### ***Contributing to Lipstadt’s Research***

Though Deborah Lipstadt’s analysis of country-wide responses to Kristallnacht is remarkable, insufficient attention has been given to the American South. While it stands to reason that the *New York Times* and *Chicago Tribune* warranted Lipstadt’s focus, given their larger readership, newspapers like the *Durham Morning Herald* and the *Durham Sun* provide us with closer case studies of localized responses to these atrocities. Thus, this paper not only sheds light on isolationist responses in a region of the United States previously untouched but also allows us to better understand how *local* contexts may have influenced reporting practices in ways that *national* contexts impacted the reporting practices of larger newspapers.

### ***Community Contexts: Durham’s Jewish Demographic and British American Tobacco***

As Duke University professor Karin Shapiro put it in a 2013 article for the *News and Observer*, “Jewish faith and culture have been part of Durham’s history since its earliest beginnings.”<sup>19</sup> Thus, though the *Herald* and *Sun* were reporting on the plight of the Jews in a country thousands of miles away, the papers did not produce their reports absent of Jewish interaction. In fact, according to the Institute of Southern Jewish Life, in the late 1800s, “most of the . . . Jewish businesses [in Durham] were owned by immigrant German-speaking Jews or their descendants.”<sup>20</sup> To quantify this observation, data presented by the American Jewish Committee, as pulled from the U.S. Census, observed that in 1927, North Carolina was home to a reported 8,252 Jews, with 375 inhabiting Durham.<sup>21</sup> We would be hard pressed to state that this was a large constitution given the comparatively higher makeup of Jews in other states like Massachusetts (225,634) or New York (1,903,890).<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, this figure was still higher than it appeared in many other neighboring states, including Mississippi (6,420), South Carolina (6,851), and West Virginia (7,471).<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Stephen A. Banning, “The Professionalization of Journalism,” 157–163.

<sup>19</sup> Karin Shapiro, “History of Jewish Life in Durham,” Museum of Durham History, August 10, 2023.

<sup>20</sup> “Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities - Durham/Chapel Hill North Carolina,” Institute of Southern Jewish Life.

<sup>21</sup> H. S. Linfield, “Jewish Population in the United States,” in *American Jewish Year Book* (American Jewish Committee, 1927), 101–198.

<sup>22</sup> H. S. Linfield, “Jewish Population in the United States,” 101–198.

<sup>23</sup> H. S. Linfield, “Jewish Population in the United States,” 101–198.

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NUMBER OF JEWS AND THEIR DISTRIBUTION BY STATE, 1917 AND 1927<sup>1</sup>

STATE	1917			1927		
	Total Population	Jews	Per Cent	Total Population	Jews	Per Cent
Alabama	2,363,939	11,086	0.47	2,549,000	12,891	0.5
Arizona	263,788	1,013	0.38	459,000	1,455	0.32
Arkansas	1,766,343	5,012	0.28	1,923,000	8,850	0.46
California	3,029,032	63,652	2.10	4,433,000	123,284	2.78
Colorado	988,320	14,565	1.47	1,074,000	20,321	1.89
Connecticut	1,265,373	66,862	5.28	1,636,000	91,538	5.59
Delaware	215,160	3,806	1.77	243,000	5,310	2.18
D. of C.	369,282	10,000	2.71	540,000	16,000	2.96
Florida	916,185	6,451	0.70	1,363,000	13,402	0.98
Georgia	2,895,841	22,414	7.74	3,171,000	23,179	0.73
Idaho	445,176	1,078	0.24	534,000	1,141	0.21
Illinois	6,234,995	246,637	3.95	7,296,000	345,980	4.74
Indiana	2,835,492	25,833	0.91	3,150,000	27,244	0.86
Iowa	2,224,771	15,555	0.70	2,425,000	16,404	0.68
Kansas	1,851,870	9,450	0.51	1,328,000	7,792	0.59
Kentucky	2,394,093	13,362	0.56	2,538,000	19,533	0.77
Louisiana	1,856,954	12,723	0.68	1,934,000	16,432	0.85
Maine	777,340	7,387	0.95	793,000	8,480	1.07
Maryland	1,373,673	62,642	4.56	1,597,000	70,871	4.44
Massachusetts	3,775,973	189,671	5.	4,242,000	225,634	5.32
Michigan	3,094,266	63,254	2.04	4,490,000	89,462	1.99
Minnesota	2,312,445	31,462	1.36	2,686,000	43,197	1.61
Mississippi	1,976,570	3,881	0.19	1,790,618	6,420	0.36
Missouri	3,429,595	80,807	2.35	3,510,000	80,687	2.3
Montana	472,935	2,518	0.53	714,000	1,578	0.22
Nebraska	1,284,126	13,547	1.06	1,396,000	14,209	1.02
Nevada	110,738	503	0.45	77,407	264	0.34
New Hampshire	444,429	3,257	0.73	455,000	2,779	0.61
New Jersey	3,014,194	149,476	4.96	3,749,000	225,306	6.01
New Mexico	423,649	858	0.20	392,000	1,052	0.27
New York	10,460,182	1,603,923	15.33	11,423,000	1,903,890	16.67
North Carolina	2,434,381	4,915	0.20	2,897,000	8,252	0.28
North Dakota	765,319	1,492	0.19	641,192	2,749	0.43
Ohio	5,212,085	166,361	3.19	6,710,000	173,976	2.59
Oklahoma	2,289,855	5,186	0.23	2,397,000	7,823	0.33
Oregon	861,992	9,767	1.13	890,000	13,075	1.47
Pennsylvania	8,660,042	322,406	3.72	9,730,000	404,979	4.16
Rhode Island	625,865	20,502	3.27	704,000	25,003	3.56
South Carolina	1,643,205	4,816	0.29	1,845,000	6,851	0.37
South Dakota	716,972	1,262	0.18	696,000	1,584	0.23
Tennessee	2,304,629	14,034	0.61	2,485,000	22,532	0.91
Texas	4,515,423	30,839	0.68	5,397,000	46,648	0.86
Utah	443,866	3,737	0.84	522,000	2,857	0.55
Vermont	364,946	2,221	0.61	352,428	2,036	0.58
Virginia	2,213,025	15,403	0.69	2,546,000	25,656	1.01
Washington	1,597,400	9,117	0.57	1,562,000	14,698	0.94
West Virginia	1,412,602	5,129	0.36	1,696,000	7,471	0.44
Wisconsin	2,527,167	28,581	1.13	2,918,000	35,935	1.23
Wyoming	184,970	498	0.27	241,000	1,319	0.55
Total	103,640,473	3,388,951	3.27	118,140,645	4,228,029	3.58

<sup>1</sup>The population figures for 1927 and other non-census years in this table and in all subsequent tables are the estimates of the United States Bureau of the Census, or of the writer, following the method of the Census Bureau, whenever official estimates were not available.

Figure SEQ Figure \* ARABICI. Taken from the American Jewish Committee's 1927 "American Jewish Year Book."

This suggests that the Jewish population in North Carolina and Durham was undeniably present in the years leading up to Kristallnacht.

The presence of the British American Tobacco Company in Durham is not to be overlooked as we attempt to unfurl the local contexts that may have driven the *Durham Morning Herald* and the *Durham Sun* to report on the events of Kristallnacht with their respective levels of isolationist rhetoric. Born out of the origins of a “territory skirmish” between America and Great Britain, the American Tobacco Company would go on to become the Imperial Tobacco Company after James Buchanan Duke spent \$30 million to “buy up competing British tobacco firms . . . The Imperial Tobacco Company then used its new leverage to strike a deal with Duke to form the British American Tobacco Company to protect their trade interests in Great Britain.”<sup>24</sup> Business moguls in Durham had a vested interest in the affairs of their overseas partners in Britain. Through the lens of protecting an investment, this would appear to be a good reason for U.S. involvement in WWII, insofar as the Nazi-British conflict would pose a financial risk to American businesses such as this one. However, closer

<sup>24</sup> Discover Durham Staff, “Tour Durham’s Tobacco History,” Discover Durham, February 22, 2024.

analysis will show that the isolationist perspectives that emerged from these Durham-based papers were consistent with the presence of foreign business interests.

When Neville Chamberlain added his signature to the Munich Agreement on September 30, 1938, roughly a month and a half before the events of Kristallnacht, some leaders in Britain had the exceptional foresight to understand that despite the temporary appeasement of Hitler's fascist appetite, Nazi expansionism would soon pull the British into a conflict with the Third Reich. In his famous speech delivered on October 5, just a week later, Winston Churchill would acknowledge the grave threat that this deal posed to the sovereignty of European nations in the years to come: "We are in the presence of a disaster of the first magnitude . . . Do not let us blind ourselves to that . . . I fear we shall find that we have deeply compromised, and perhaps fatally endangered, the safety and even the independence of Great Britain."<sup>25</sup> With this in mind, we must acknowledge the possibility of similar fears in the United States at the time. If the British arm of the tobacco trade went under, it would logically follow that business executives such as James Duke would want to avoid involvement in the conflict, as that would only worsen the losses that the company experienced from British proximity.<sup>26</sup> It appears that American executives of this multinational corporation would likely have been incentivized to adopt an isolationist ideology, to protect their company from further deterioration in the event of the country being pulled into the war.

### ***"The Night of Broken Glass"***

Before engaging with the main body of my analysis, I will briefly detail the events of November 9 and 10, 1938, as well as the developments in the days prior, which many scholars believe contributed to these nights' events. The night of horror that has been etched into the history of Jewish persecution as "Kristallnacht" actually began two days earlier in the German embassy in France. On the morning of November 7, Herschel Grynszpan, a seventeen-year-old Polish Jew, entered the German embassy in Paris.<sup>27</sup> Stating that he had an important document to deliver to the embassy secretary, he insisted on meeting with someone. Eventually, he was given a meeting with Ernst vom Rath, one of the legation secretaries of the Parisian office.<sup>28</sup> During that meeting, Grynszpan fatally wounded vom Rath with a revolver, and two days later, at 4:30 pm on November 9, vom Rath passed away as a result of his injuries.<sup>29</sup> On the morning of the killing, Grynszpan left a note for his uncle, reading, "My heart bleeds when I think about our tragedy . . . I have to protest in such a way that the whole world hears my protest, and this is what I intend to do."<sup>30</sup>

In the preceding month, Grynszpan had received news that new passport regulations, to be instituted on October 30, would prevent his Polish parents from traveling.<sup>31</sup> They were living in Germany at the time, as were many other Polish Jews.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Winston Churchill, "Disaster of the First Magnitude, 1938," America's National Churchill Museum, October 5, 1938.

<sup>26</sup> According to the official British American Tobacco Website, the years leading up to WWII marked a time in which the company's "global operations" were severely disrupted. "Our history," British American Tobacco.

<sup>27</sup> Uta Gerhardt and Thomas Karlauf, eds., *The Night of Broken Glass: Eyewitness Accounts of Kristallnacht*, (Polity Press, 2012).

<sup>28</sup> Uta Gerhardt and Thomas Karlauf, *The Night of Broken Glass*.

<sup>29</sup> Uta Gerhardt and Thomas Karlauf, *The Night of Broken Glass*.

<sup>30</sup> Uta Gerhardt and Thomas Karlauf, *The Night of Broken Glass*.

<sup>31</sup> Uta Gerhardt and Thomas Karlauf, *The Night of Broken Glass*.

<sup>32</sup> Uta Gerhardt and Thomas Karlauf, *The Night of Broken Glass*.

Since this would have left them stranded, the Germans expelled the Jews before then: “On 18 October 1938, on Hitler’s orders, 15,000 Polish-born Jews resident in Germany were declared to be ‘stateless’ and expelled.”<sup>33</sup> However, Polish border officials would not permit these refugees into the country, and thus, Grynszpan’s parents and thousands of other Polish Jews found themselves stranded in a “no-man’s land” between the two countries without food, shelter, or other necessities.<sup>34</sup> They were held there for several weeks.<sup>35</sup>

The traditional interpretation of these events has been causal, with scholars noting the timeline between the expulsions and the subsequent assassination of vom Rath. Immediately after the German secretary was shot, Hitler sent his personal physician to attend to the wounds, showing his “unfailing instinct for the explosiveness of a situation.”<sup>36</sup> Then, after the secretary’s death, Joseph Goebbels communicated with other Nazi officials, orchestrating the government’s response to the events: “he indicated no police protection was to be given ‘the Jews’ and they were to be left to the mercy of ‘spontaneous’ acts of retribution by everyday Germans and Austrians.”<sup>37</sup> Though direct orders were not issued in any public statement, there is consensus amongst scholars that these events were organized, and that the ensuing rioting crowds were incited by Nazi officials and their statements.

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<sup>33</sup> Martin Gilbert, *Never Again: A History of the Holocaust* (RosettaBooks, 2015), 138.

<sup>34</sup> Martin Gilbert, *Never Again*, 138.

<sup>35</sup> Martin Gilbert, *Never Again*, 138.

<sup>36</sup> Uta Gerhardt and Thomas Karlauf, *The Night of Broken Glass*.

<sup>37</sup> “Kristallnacht: The Night of Broken Glass,” The National World War II Museum, New Orleans.



Figure 2. Photo courtesy of Martin Gilbert's work, where the caption reads, "A Berlin street on 10 November 1938, the morning after Kristallnacht."

Figure 3. Photo courtesy of the United State Holocaust Memorial Museum.. The caption reads, "Interior of a synagogue destroyed during Kristallnacht. Dortmund, Germany, November 1938."

Julius Streicher, one of Hitler's most devout followers during the interwar years and publisher of the anti-Semitic weekly newsletter *Der Stürmer*, presented a speech after the events on November 10, which included eerie rhetoric alluding to government involvement:

We could have killed all the Jews in Germany yesterday, but we did not do it. The demonstrations in Franconia were, in general, disciplined, clear, and farsighted . . . They showed a world friendly to the Jews that, when necessary, the German people can do whatever has to be done. And National Socialism has proven that when it acts with determination, it is successful.<sup>38</sup>

All in all, the magnitude of the destruction was devastating to Jewish business owners, families, communities, and culture across the country. More than 90 Jews were killed during the riots, hundreds of synagogues were burned down, and over 20,000 Jews were "seized and sent" to the concentration camps at Dachau, Buchenwald, and Sachsenhausen in the days following.<sup>39</sup> Eyewitness accounts corroborate the body of evidence that scholars use to investigate this tragedy.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Randall L. Bytwerk, *Landmark Speeches of National Socialism* (Texas A&M University Press, 2008), 90.

<sup>39</sup> Martin Gilbert, *Never Again*, 139.

<sup>40</sup> For further reading, I recommend the accounts in Uta Gerhardt and Thomas Karlauf's, *The Night of Broken Glass: Eyewitness Accounts of Kristallnacht*, which I refer to at various points in my research. In 2018, the BBC also published the results of an interview with Ruth Winkelmann, a woman who witnessed the events unfold in Berlin at the age of 10.

*The Durham Morning Herald*

For my analysis of the *Herald* and the *Sun*, I feel it best to start by looking at each paper's reporting practices in the weeks leading up to Kristallnacht before diving into their responses to the events of November 9 and 10, 1938. This will allow us to better orient ourselves within the framework of these publications' reporting practices, and more easily pinpoint where such patterns were maintained or diverged from following the Nazi riots against Jews, their businesses, and their homes.

Perhaps a prelude to the later occurrences of isolationist rhetoric, the *Herald's* October 27 paper, published roughly two weeks before Kristallnacht, harkened back to President Roosevelt's latest declarations of contempt against foreign powers who persecuted Jews, with a headline reading "F.D.R. Lashes Aggressor Nations," later adding the message in subheadings that he "Deplores Arms Race But Declares America Must Rush Warship Construction."<sup>41</sup> The reports mainly involved quotations from one of Roosevelt's recent speeches in which he criticized nations that were arming "to the teeth."<sup>42</sup> The paper's analysis of Roosevelt's words may not explicitly indicate an isolationist perspective, but its interest in those words, which conveyed a desire to stay out of international conflict against the increasing challenge to do so, shows that these topics were on the forefront of editors' minds, and thus the public's as well.

Fast forward to the next day, October 28, and we can see this pattern more explicitly. On page eight, an article titled "Nazi Pressure on Jews Increasing" showcases some of the blame-shifting rhetoric that Lipstadt mentions in action. Talking of the recent surrendering of passports was mandated for all Jews in Germany, the editors emphasize how "numerous cases are reported wherein foreign consulates, notably the British, refused to grant visas to holders of 'J' passports."<sup>43</sup> The inclusion of this crucial detail, though seemingly insignificant, indicates that there may have been some effort amongst editors, conscious or not, to point out the instances in which British immigration officials were unwilling to support Jewish refugees. Such a notion not only lends support to the idea of a pre-existing isolationist viewpoint but perhaps the early phases of a fledgling anti-immigration cause as well. As Lipstadt explains, and as we shall soon come to find, "Kristallnacht exemplified the way in which American contempt for German behavior coexisted with an unwavering commitment to isolationism and anti-immigrationism."<sup>44</sup> These two competing ideologies were in play before Kristallnacht as well. Thus, if they appear in the reports coming in after November 9 and 10, we can view the post-Kristallnacht reporting practices as an example of continuity in these viewpoints, ones which were so deep seated in American public opinion that they were not abandoned even after reporters bore witness to the persecution carried out during the "night of broken glass."

Having laid the groundwork for the isolationist perspectives inherent in the *Durham Morning Herald's* reporting practices pre-Kristallnacht, we can now venture into the period of interest to deduce where and how these viewpoints changed or remained the same. The first reports directly related to Kristallnacht came through in an article from November 10, where the murder of Ernst vom Rath, secretary of the German Embassy in France, was detailed. The article included plain language, and the writers described the occurrence without much analysis, putting the article at less than

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<sup>41</sup> *Durham Morning Herald* (Durham, North Carolina), October 27, 1938. *NewsBank: Selected America's Historical Newspapers*.

<sup>42</sup> *Durham Morning Herald* (Durham, North Carolina), October 27, 1938.

<sup>43</sup> *Durham Morning Herald* (Durham, North Carolina), October 28, 1938.

<sup>44</sup> Deborah Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief*, 170.

50 lines in length. What is most noticeable about this article, however, does not relate to its content. Rather, it is the fact that such groundbreaking news was on the fourteenth page of the November 10 publication.

Whereas across the country, papers like the *New York Times* and *LA Times* placed the news on their front page, and others like the *Washington Post* put it on the third page, the *Morning Herald* threw its account of vom Rath's death to the back of its publication on the fourteenth of eighteen pages. Though difficult to prove that the paper's editors were explicitly attempting to bury the article out of an isolationist perspective, the fact that the column was not included farther up in the issue demonstrates the likely notion that the editors certainly were not attempting to draw particular attention to this event. Thus, the way that vom Rath's death was treated by the publication is certainly compatible with the isolationist perspective, as it was seemingly indirectly treated as a foreign issue between the French and the Germans rather than something worthy of American attention.

One alternative explanation to this reality could have to do with the paper's production schedule, as it wouldn't be difficult to imagine that perhaps the front few pages had simply already been designed, and thus the only place to fit the breaking news of the Kristallnacht story was at the back. However, it should be noted that international news had an exceptionally difficult time making it onto the front page of *The Durham Morning Herald* in the week prior to Kristallnacht, which might lend support to this project's proposed theory that this story placement was intentional. For example, on November 1<sup>st</sup>, the articles that received the largest headings on the front page read, "Durham Democrats Split Over Teague's Successor; Committee is Deadlocked," and "Wallace and Van Zeeland to Head 10 Speakers of Duke Symposium" respectively.<sup>45</sup> Clearly, the *Herald* was predominantly concerned with reporting on local news, and it wasn't for a lack of supply of the international variety. On that very same day, *The New York Times* included multiple columns pertaining to international news on its front page: "France Bars Foreigners Wounded in Spanish War," "Slovak Plan Casts Reich in Chief Role in Central Europe," and "U.S. Warned to Gird for Economic War" all made appearances.<sup>46</sup> Though most would agree that *The New York Times* was likely a far more cosmopolitan and global-reaching publication than the *Herald*, even so, examples that showcase such a large discrepancy in international news coverage seem to support this project's predictions.

Looking ahead, on November 11<sup>th</sup>, the *Herald* interestingly provided a much more in-depth report, with the events covering two columns on the front page. In-line with Lipstadt's analysis, the paper included plenty of quotations from other officials, as well as its own statements, which vehemently deplored the actions taken against Jews. There is no questioning the fact that the *Morning Herald* thus fell in line with most of the rest of the country in their condemnation of the Nazi regime. They quoted the executive committee of the world Jewish congress, who firmly stated that "the real culprit is the stupid and criminal persecution in Germany, where all the Jews are condemned without investigation by those who never cease to preach the priority of might over right, of violence and hate."<sup>47</sup> In quoting this group so extensively, the paper inadvertently lent its page space as a platform for Jewish voices in condemnation of these so-called "reprisals" for the killing of vom Rath, which was done by a seventeen-year-old Polish Jew. What stands out amongst this lash back, however, is the inclusion of the Pope's condemnation of Jewish persecution. This theme of relying on church

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<sup>45</sup> *Durham Morning Herald* (Durham, North Carolina), November 1, 1938.

<sup>46</sup> *The New York Times* (New York, New York), November 1, 1938.

<sup>47</sup> *Durham Morning Herald* (Durham, North Carolina), November 11, 1938.

officials will appear in later articles and thus may be an identifiable characteristic of the *Morning Herald's* journalistic pattern of practice, one that stands out as distinct amongst the way in which other papers went about reporting on these events.

On November 12<sup>th</sup>, the *Herald* took the approach of essentially regurgitating statements made by Joseph Goebbels. Among these, one stands out in particular which may provide insight into the paper's unique perception of Kristallnacht as an organized event, one which was comprised of state involvement rather than, as other papers mischaracterized it, a supposed mixture of popular discontent, which resulted in the widespread riots. With the subheading of "Denies it Was Organized," the article proceeds by quoting Goebbels, who proclaimed that "if I had organized it, it would have been more successful, more radical, and the result would have been quite different."<sup>48</sup> Even by mentioning Goebbels' push back against the thought of organized violence, the *Morning Herald* places a particular emphasis on this phenomenon in ways that other papers simply did not. Conversely, the paper also seems to leave the event's *level* of organization open to interpretation insofar as it refers to Kristallnacht as "Germany's sudden nation-wide outburst of anti-Semitism." The "suddenness" with which the event occurred would likely indicate a low level of organization, though not completely eradicate the possibility of it. Thus, we can see that *Morning Herald* was actively trying to understand the cause of these events, a trend that Lipstadt points out as widespread, and which is easily observed here.<sup>49</sup>

As previously mentioned, we must take the time to adequately address the November 14<sup>th</sup> issue of the publication, where various Church officials—and their respective responses to Kristallnacht—are mentioned. These quotations are of particular intrigue for a few reasons. Firstly, by dedicating so much space in the paper to these comments, the *Morning Herald* implicitly indicated that there was something important about the fact that this particular group of people was condemning the persecutions. Surely, there were many people at the time with opinions on what was taking place in Germany. However, to include only these comments shows that perhaps the *Morning Herald* felt that condemnation from Christian officials proved how bad these atrocities truly were, and in a way supported the Nazi condemnation that weaved its way through the *Morning Herald's* publications for weeks to come. With reference to The Right Reverend Mr. Manning, the Protestant Episcopal bishop of New York, the man stated that "Such action as that which is now taking place in Germany is an open defiance of God and a shame to humanity."<sup>50</sup> Later, the comments of Reverend Harry Emerson Fosdick, a pastor in the Riverside church of New York, were included: "The appalling persecution of the Jews in Germany is an outrage to the conscience of the civilized world."<sup>51</sup> In addition to the two reverends' comments, many others were included, from Rev. Dr. E. W. Barnes, bishop of Birmingham, and John Haynes Holms of the Nonsectarian Community church of New York. What's most interesting about these reports is that there doesn't seem to be any geographic rhyme or reason to whose sermons were mentioned. Though my previous examples highlight bishops and pastors from New York, the article also mentioned Rev. Dr. Clarence Edward Macartney of Pittsburgh, Archbishop Samuel A. Stritch of Milwaukee, and Dr. Daniel Poling of Philadelphia.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> *Durham Morning Herald* (Durham, North Carolina), November 12, 1938.

<sup>49</sup> Deborah Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief*, 73.

<sup>50</sup> *Durham Morning Herald* (Durham, North Carolina), November 14, 1938.

<sup>51</sup> *Durham Morning Herald* (Durham, North Carolina), November 14, 1938.

<sup>52</sup> *Durham Morning Herald* (Durham, North Carolina), November 14, 1938.

With the editors clearly willing to devote an entire article to these denouncements, any onlooker would be hard-pressed to argue that the *Morning Herald's* reporting did not constitute a condemnation of Nazi activities. Of course, many other articles make reference to the words of Joseph Goebbels, amongst other party leaders and members. However, the dissemination of that type of information was so widespread amongst American newspapers, that it would hardly suffice to categorize it as anti-condemnation on these sorts of grounds; rather, it would more likely fall under the category of information which was reported to provide insight into the party's response to these events and the subsequent condemnation they faced in its aftermath.

Using the quotations from these church officials, however, we not only are provided with insight into where the *Morning Herald* stood in terms of its sentiment towards Jewish persecution, nor do we only come to the conclusion that the editors valued the opinions of these religious figures; we also can make the observation that these comments were simply that: comments. None of these religious figures called for any sort of action on behalf of the American people, government, or military. As such, this type of reporting seemed to fit within the pre-existing isolationist framework that constituted the tone of previous articles, and which would continue to permeate future reports from the *Morning Herald*.

### *The Durham Sun*

Once again looking at papers from the weeks leading up to Kristallnacht, we can recognize a staunchly different approach to reporting on Nazi affairs than the one we recognized in the *Herald*. Many of these reports on Nazi activity dealt with Hitler's ever-increasing presence on the global stage, with the editors identifying and expanding upon the German Chancellor's pushes into Czechoslovakia and even the Philippines.<sup>53</sup> One can notice this in the sub headers, "Czechs Declare Nazi Troops Overstepped Frontier in Occupying New Village," and "Hitler Indicates Attention Turned Upon Philippines."<sup>54</sup> While one could certainly deduce from these reports that these issues were becoming increasingly prominent in *other* parts of the world, the natural conclusion could just as easily be that Nazi influence was spreading rapidly and could soon involve even more countries, including America. If we are to interpret the *Sun's* reports and their potential to have such an effect on public opinion in this way, it's easy to differentiate this lack of isolationism from the *Herald*, where the opposite seems to be the case. We will come back to this possibility when analyzing the reports that came through after Kristallnacht, but for now, these considerations are important to keep in my mind as we think about the ways in which the two publications differed from one another in subtle but observable ways.

On October 22<sup>nd</sup> we can observe articles which, although composed of extremely different content, similarly lead us to believe that the *Sun* was less interested in pushing an isolationist agenda. Providing a report from Louis Lochner, the Associated Press's head correspondent in Berlin, the *Sun* inserted an account of the ongoing discussions between the U.S., Britain, and Nazi Germany in attempting "to devise a triangular agreement to supplant or supplement the proposed Anglo-American trade treaty . . . One of their tasks, it was suggested would be to restore confidence among business leaders of the three countries involved."<sup>55</sup> This talk of U.S. involvement in international affairs, especially those directly concerning Britain and

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<sup>53</sup> *Durham Sun* (Durham, North Carolina), October 20, 1938: 1.

<sup>54</sup> *Durham Sun* (Durham, North Carolina), October 20, 1938: 1.

<sup>55</sup> *Durham Sun* (Durham, North Carolina), October 22, 1938: 1.

Germany, two countries between which tensions were escalating, would logically contradict an argument supporting the notion that the *Sun* maintained an isolationist rhetoric similar to that of the *Morning Herald*. Of course, it must be noted that a paper, even one of an isolationist-leaning editorial board, would likely be compelled to report on these events regardless of their biases given the implications this information has regarding U.S. business interests. Nevertheless, the fact that we see such reports appear in the *Sun* and not the *Morning Herald* supports my argument that isolationist rhetoric was more blatantly contraposed in the former paper.

Looking now to the reporting practices of the *Sun* during and in the immediate aftermath of Kristallnacht, we can see how these pre-existing themes continued to manifest themselves across multiple articles amidst other concurrent patterns, which together will demonstrate how the *Sun*'s reaction to the "night of broken glass" can provide historians with considerable insight into the paper's reporting biases. The *Durham Sun* first broke the news of the events in the Third Reich on November 10 with the headline, "Anti-Jewish Violence Sweeps Germany," a fairly standard articulation of the atrocities. However, for the rest of the article, it would hardly be appropriate to describe its account as such.

Just a few lines into the report, the writers explained how "Only after more than 12 hours of nationwide violence did propaganda Minister Paul Joseph Goebbels call a halt, in a brief appeal to the people to desist from further demonstrations."<sup>56</sup> Using distinctive language like "only" and "brief" to describe the length of time it took to respond, and the minimalism of said response, the *Sun* clearly demonstrated its contempt for such violence. Similarly, it indirectly conveyed its comprehension of the level of organization behind the attacks, insofar as the government's lack of intervention until the twelfth hour constituted a level of complicity which couldn't be ignored. Later, the writers more explicitly identified the likelihood of government involvement in these widespread riots, noting how "The reports indicated that the campaign was conducted with a thoroughness and precision that left little to chance."<sup>57</sup>

As previously mentioned, this cognizance was unique amongst American newspapers. Aside from showcasing the paper's contempt for the Third Reich and their campaign against the Jews, this effort to go beyond merely scraping the surface of these foreign reports demonstrates that editors at the *Sun* may have felt a certain urgency in clearly emphasizing the depth of Nazi government involvement in anti-Jewish activity in Germany. This, taken in tandem with what we saw in the *Morning Herald*, where an isolationist rhetoric may have been more prevalent, it's possible too that the *Sun*'s unique response and emphasis on government involvement could have been at least partially in response to their neighbor's biases (even if, as previously mentioned, the *Herald* was able to hint at government involvement/organization in their own way). Equally distinct from the *Herald*'s method of reporting, was the way in which the *Sun* went about detailing the telephoned reports which were disseminated from cities across Germany, collected by the Associated Press, and distributed to outlets like the *Sun*. Citing how in Munich, "All Jews were told they must leave the country," how in Cologne "Crowds broke windows in nearly every Jewish shop," and in Salzburg "shops of small Jewish tradesmen were invaded, demolished and looted," the *Durham Sun* went the extra mile in emphasizing the "nationwide extent," as they referred to it, of these anti-Jewish attacks.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> *Durham Sun* (Durham, North Carolina), November 10, 1938: 1.

<sup>57</sup> *Durham Sun* (Durham, North Carolina), November 10, 1938: 1.

<sup>58</sup> *Durham Sun* (Durham, North Carolina), November 10, 1938: 1.

By not only harping on the point of organization embedded within these seemingly spontaneous riots, but subsequently detailing concrete examples of such assaults and persecution across various cities, it seems increasingly probable that the *Sun* was dedicated to defending this notion as a result of some deep, unknown, but nevertheless logically deducible reasons pertaining, to some extent, to their devotion to holding the Nazi government accountable, and for distinguishing their paper from the *Herald* in their more explicit denouncements—perhaps as a result of their lesser commitment to isolationism.

The *Sun*'s staunch commitment to pushback on misinformation, misinterpretations of foreign events, and in particular false reports conveyed by Nazi officials, is once again on full display in the following day's article. On November 11<sup>th</sup>, the paper produced an article wherein they published a number of Joseph Goebbels' statements following the events of Kristallnacht, of which they summarily responded to with indirect indignation and calculated pushback. For example, the paper mentions how, according to Goebbels, the "dynamiting of synagogues and destruction of Jewish shops, was spontaneous . . . He insisted there was no looting."<sup>59</sup> Immediately after, however, the paper then details how "Trustworthy eyewitnesses yesterday said they had seen shops in the Arcade between Friedrichstrasse and Under Den Linden and in other part[s] of the city looted."<sup>60</sup> Though not directly conveying a rebuttal to Goebbels' reports, the *Sun* utilizes an evidence-based approach in making claims that do in fact directly contradict the information conveyed by the Minister of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda. In this way, the editors almost let the information speak for itself.

This recurring theme of indirect commentary, it should be noted, is one which may provide us with considerable insight regarding the evidently limited extent to which American newspapers, even ones so clearly against the Nazi persecution of Jews, were willing to directly condemn German authorities for the atrocities of Kristallnacht, versus the more common way in which they indirectly undermined Nazi reports through effective journalistic practices, such as reliance on eyewitness accounts. Thus, despite the *Sun*'s considerably larger steps in the direction of denouncement, anti-isolationism, and fuller comprehension of the exact level of government involvement in the social unrest and hatred which accompanied Kristallnacht, the paper may nevertheless be guilty of falling into this category of indirect reporting. Such a conclusion, when taken in conjunction with our analysis of the *Morning Herald*, could have profound ramifications for our understanding of the types of limitations placed on newspapers and their reporting practices when writing about unique events like Kristallnacht, in which standard reporting practices cannot effectively deal with a regime's or ruler's level of misinformation. Perhaps, too, this inability to directly speak out has to do with the standards of professionalism and flexible definition for objectivity which I previously touched on.

### ***Conclusion***

What we find in analyzing these articles is not something that we can easily point to and define as "isolationist" or "anti-immigration". Rather, by analyzing articles over a given period of time and around a particular event, we can begin to recognize patterns of practice which allude to potential biases inherent within a paper's articles, perhaps based on editorial opinion, local pressures, or a seemingly infinite number of other possibilities. However, if we can take these observations and compare them to what

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<sup>59</sup> *Durham Sun* (Durham, North Carolina), November 11, 1938: 1.

<sup>60</sup> *Durham Sun* (Durham, North Carolina), November 11, 1938: 1.

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we know about the historical context of the community in which a paper is based, as well as compare these biases to those of a nation as a whole, we can begin to formulate predictions about a newspaper's subliminal messaging that are likely to be more accurate than they would otherwise be.

This is precisely the approach used in this paper, and the resulting research has produced a number of insights which have the potential to tell us something useful about American reporting on the events of Kristallnacht on the whole. Firstly, the differing levels of isolationist rhetoric utilized in each of the papers exemplifies the fact that geographic location need not directly impact a paper's perspective in this arena. Thus, it is plausible that some other reason must have contributed to the *Herald's* preference for isolationist rhetoric, and the *Sun's* comparative lack of such language and ideas. Second, newspapers in America collectively responded to these atrocities with a unified front of condemnation. However, that distaste often came across through indirect means, which may say something about the industry-specific limitations imposed on newspapers when it comes to speaking out on world issues, even those of which entire countries can be seemingly unified in their opinions. Finally, I came to find that there is still much to uncover in the words, contexts, and intentions embedded in each of the articles I analyzed. A newspaper article is not an obvious, easy, or straightforward source to examine. There are layers of complexity, which have been mostly weeded out through close analysis, which make it difficult to formulate concrete conclusions. Nevertheless, such is the interpretive nature of this work, and the reason why scholars continue to revisit these questions.

One way to better understand the motives informing a piece of journalism, an author, an editor, or even a media company is to engage in studies such as this one. By using such strategies of analysis, we can apply these techniques of informed dissection to approach any article with a critical lens and an eye for better understanding. Moving forward, this will be a crucial skill for individuals of any society that consumes media to develop, in order to combat misinformation and to understand the contexts, pressures, and biases impacting journalistic expression at every level.

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# DECODING DEVOTION: The Historiographical Struggle to Understand Crusader Motivations Randal Wilson

In his work *Contesting the Crusades*, Norman Housley presents an engaging challenge that has stoked conversation for the past decade and only increased in difficulty and excitement. In the closing statements of his first chapter, he compares the difficulty politicians and EU lawyers would face in trying to present to the public a European “super-state” to the trouble faced by medieval canon lawyers in describing the crusades. He contends that politicians must find a way through the complexity of interpreting these arguments to a laity that lacks the training and patience for deeper analysis.<sup>1</sup> He then states his view of the historian’s task: “We can let the sources speak to us at length. On crusading...they do not speak with a single voice, but the more attentively and sensitively we listen to them, the more likely we are to get close to what crusading meant to its contemporaries.”<sup>2</sup> Indeed, this is the case when attempting to understand the complicated topic of crusader motivations. This paper will argue that the secular and religious motives held by crusaders were not always distinct; rather, they formed an inseparable union in the late medieval religious consciousness. Or, to follow Housley’s analogy more closely, they were two separate voices in the same chorus.

The disparity between past and present morality poses challenges to understanding the complexity of the past. This paper will explain some of the motivations of a select few crusades to clarify the connections between the crusades and pre-modern Europe’s complex religious culture. It will also discuss the challenges and current scholarly debate regarding crusader motivations, such as sifting through clerical sources while trying to discuss and justify secular issues like material profit from war. This analysis of the complex relationship between religion and warfare will be an original contribution to the ongoing scholarly conversation that discusses these impactful and culturally significant conflicts.

An important method utilized by historians is to apply reason to the intentions of people who swore an oath of pilgrimage and participated in a crusade. One example of determination of intention is Housley pointing to the considerable number of peasants who went on the First Crusade. This social class had no hope to transcend their social status or win an Outremer principality of their own, implying a strong emphasis on penitential motivations likely shared, to some degree, by the nobility.<sup>3</sup> To fully comprehend the historiographical challenges in understanding crusade motivations, one must first attempt to grasp the previously mentioned religious and secular cultural ideals. Christopher Tyerman explains that ideas of war and bloodshed in the name of God were not incompatible in the context of the crusades.<sup>4</sup> To separate these two ideas, as some would in a modern era, is to misunderstand holy war justifications.

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<sup>1</sup> Norman Housley, *Contesting the Crusades* (Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 22–23.

<sup>2</sup> Housley, *Contesting the Crusades*, 23.

<sup>3</sup> Housley, *Contesting the Crusades*, 34.

<sup>4</sup> Christopher Tyerman, *How to Plan a Crusade: Reason and Religious War in the High Middle Ages* (Pegasus Books, 2015), 12.

I will specifically consider the First, Third, and Albigensian Crusades to examine how religious ideology and zeal, alongside factors like social pressure, intersected with the desire for secular gain and ambition. An important methodological approach is to examine the pre-crusade actions of nobles from each of these conflicts, as well as the language used in the Church documents calling for each crusade. The importance of the approach lies in the idea of intentionality. By reading the available sources, a clearer picture can be formed of the intentions of the potential crusader based on their actions taken before taking the cross. This paper's argument rests on two ideas: St. Augustine of Hippo's philosophy of war and Housley's analysis defining and framing crusade motivations in *Contesting the Crusades*. Both are fundamental in explaining how religious motivation, secular gain, and violence were complementary and rationalized together in the crusader mindset.

### **Justifying a Crusade: For Wealth of Land or Spirit?**

The early Church fathers allowed for justifications for the secular aspects of war. For this, one must turn to the writing of St. Augustine of Hippo, who laid a foundation for what became a Christian tradition of "just-war." St. Augustine describes war as a lamentable and evil thing that was nevertheless necessary at times: "the wise man will wage just wars [for] it is the wrongdoing of the opposing party which compels the wise man to wage just wars"<sup>5</sup> Although Augustine argued this from a religious perspective, he included instances of secular justification. The same occurred when he referred to war being justified if it were waged in pursuit of peace because, in his words, "even they who make war desire nothing but victory to attain peace with glory."<sup>6</sup> The core of Augustine's argument is found in his statement discussing the victories of the earthly city, which is his metaphor for secular society:

But the things which this city desires cannot justly be said to be evil, for it is itself, in its own kind, better than all other human good. For it desires earthly peace for the sake of enjoying earthly goods, and it makes war in order to attain to this peace; since, if it has conquered, and there remains no one to resist it, it enjoys a peace which it had not while there opposing parties who contested for the enjoyment of those things which were too small to satisfy both.<sup>7</sup>

St. Augustine, at the end of the chapter, says that these things derived from a desire for peace, even the pursuit of earthly goods, are "gifts of God."<sup>8</sup> This idea would not have been unfamiliar to more learned classes of society and certainly would have been known to authorities within the Church. It is not unreasonable to think that the anxiety of calling for holy war in the First Crusade by Pope Urban II could have been assuaged by these words.

Urban II's offer of salvation was one of the key elements of crusade rhetoric. The idea that the Church offered heavenly salvation through war went back as early as the ninth century, when Leo IV and John II made comments about those who died in war. Leo IV stated, "The kingdom of heaven will be given as a reward to those who shall be killed in this war."<sup>9</sup> He also made it clear that this reward was not from him or the Church, but from God, reinforcing the idea that earthly mandate was given by

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<sup>5</sup> Augustine of Hippo, *City of God*, trans. Marcus Dods, in *The Great Books of the Western World*, ed. Robert Maynard Hutchins, Vol. 18 (Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952), 515.

<sup>6</sup> Augustine of Hippo, *City of God*, 517.

<sup>7</sup> Augustine of Hippo, *City of God*, 399.

<sup>8</sup> Augustine of Hippo, *City of God*, 399.

<sup>9</sup> Pope Leo IV, "Pope Leo IV (847–855) to the Franks," in *The Crusades: A Reader*, 2nd ed., ed. S.J. Allen and Emilie Amt (University of Toronto Press, 2014), 17.

heavenly authority. John II made a similar claim: “We confidently reply that those who, out of love for the Christian religion, shall die fighting bravely against pagans or unbelievers, shall receive eternal life.”<sup>10</sup> Both of these statements were made in the context of the fighting against Muslims in the Iberian peninsula, although it is not unreasonable to say that the Franks would have retained this precedent well into the eleventh century when the call for the First Crusade was made.

Pope Urban II officially called for a crusade in a sermon at Clermont in 1095 after learning about the plight of Eastern Christians who were suffering attacks from Muslim armies. Several versions of this sermon survive as written accounts. One interesting detail from the speech, as relayed by Fulcher of Chartres, was the acknowledgement of rampant violence in Europe among Christians. Noteworthy here is that fighting between the faithful was considered unjust.<sup>11</sup> This establishes the idea that, in the minds of clerical authorities, fighting between the faithful was considered wrongful, there was a difference between just and unjust war, and one of the standards for just war was to fight against “infidels.”<sup>12</sup> The specific language used by Urban II also appealed to the sense of self-identity for the knightly class: “Let those who for a long time have been robbers now become knights.”<sup>13</sup>

Knights were primarily motivated by ancestral duty, honor, social status, and piety, which is why Urban II’s condemnation of wars against Christians was so significant. To do so appealed to a knight’s sense of honor and religious devotion. If a knight believed himself to be fighting an unjust war, then that knight was not upholding Christian standards. This clever rhetorical strategy leveraged the notoriously violent knights’ religious anxiety in Urban’s favor and allowed him to redirect knightly violence towards a Christian cause.<sup>14</sup> Although outdated and already challenged by H.E.J. Cowdrey, it is necessary to point out Carl Erdmann’s analysis of Urban’s intent in calling the crusade and Cowdrey’s rebuttal. Erdmann argues that Urban had intended the First Crusade to be a campaign focused solely on combating “infidels” in the Middle East, and only later attached the idea of pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre.<sup>15</sup> Cowdrey counters this, claiming “that the pope was in agreement with the crusaders, for whom Jerusalem was central from first to last in their view of their task.”<sup>16</sup> This presents the issue of clerical bias in the sources; It is far easier to find completely positive reinforcement for Latin crusaders if only examining Latin sources.

An arduous task for historians is to separate the biases of the Latin chroniclers and the other parties involved with the crusades, such as the Eastern Christians. The categorization of motivations on a social class level can get bogged down by these biases. The knightly social class is perhaps the most challenging to understand when applying a singular religious and secular philosophy to their well-documented violent behavior. Anna Comnena, daughter of the Byzantine Emperor Alexius, described an exchange between the Emperor and a Frankish knight, in which the knight recalled how, in a sanctuary, prayers to God were recited before men engaged in single

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<sup>10</sup> Pope Leo IV, “Pope Leo IV (847–855) to the Franks,” 17.

<sup>11</sup> Fulcher of Chartres, “Urban II’s Call for Crusade,” in *The Crusades: A Reader*, 2nd ed., ed. S.J. Allen and Emilie Amt (University of Toronto Press, 2014), 35.

<sup>12</sup> “Infidel” is contextually appropriate language based on the Latin term *Infidelis*. Here, it is used to mean “unfaithful” and encompasses several people, including Cathar Christian heretics, soldiers of the Ayyubid sultanate, and Fatimid and Seljuk Turks.

<sup>13</sup> Fulcher of Chartres, “Urban II’s Call for Crusade,” 35.

<sup>14</sup> Housley, *Contesting the Crusades*, 34.

<sup>15</sup> Housley, *Contesting the Crusades*, 32.

<sup>16</sup> Housley, *Contesting the Crusades*, 33.

combat.<sup>17</sup> This is an exemplary look into the relationship between violence and religion.<sup>18</sup> Although it may seem antithetical to Comnena's story, knights were not irrational brutes seeking wanton violence. Considering the monumental logistical challenge of organizing a military campaign that involved traveling on foot to the Holy Land from Europe, it is unreasonable and arguably disingenuous to label these men as anything other than motivated and organized religious fighting men, such as Comnena possibly tried to do in her retelling of the Frankish knight and his local custom for combat. As Tyerman points out, the idea of the "thinking soldier" began to appear in contemporary writings, such as Bohemond in the *Gesta Francorum*.<sup>19</sup> Tyerman's method of applying reason can be used here; in fact, the application of reason in their religious and social context is what would have inspired them.

Fitting a justification for violence into the same compartment as devout religious pilgrimage was a tricky rhetorical challenge, and it was certainly an anxiety of the social class that was so prone to violence. John France points to Erdmann's ideas on the Church and its attitude toward violence. Erdmann argues that, even in a just war, killing required a substantial penitential act, as it was still murder.<sup>20</sup> However, France rebuts this by pointing to "very serious modifications" in the official Church's stance during the early medieval period.<sup>21</sup> Much like material gain, violence in warfare sanctioned by the Church fit firmly within the zeitgeist of the European Christian knight. France continues:

Beyond doubt, the principle that killing was murder was maintained in these penitentials, but the huge difference between the penances for private killing and those for killing in war was an effective modification of the formal position. This distinction arose from the conditions and thinking embodied in the very notion of the 'just war' as it was developed by St. Augustine.<sup>22</sup>

One of the conditions France is referencing here is the idea that war must be fought on the proper authority, which in the case of the First Crusade is Urban II. Given his own knightly lineage, it is important to recognize Urban's brilliance in using promises of redemption to soothe the elites' anxieties. This further supports the view that those who organized and joined the Crusades were intelligent and pragmatic. That also makes it reasonable to assume these *crusignati* would have been equally as capable and intelligent men. One such "thinking man" of the First Crusade was Bohemond of Taranto.

Contemporaries described Bohemond as an imposing figure, and thanks to his previous war experience, he was one of the most valuable leaders on the First Crusade. Bohemond's major sin is that history remembers him as being an ambitious man more than a Christian. Since Bohemond's assets in southern Italy were said not to be very impressive, Thomas Madden would say that Bohemond was, "More than any other

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<sup>17</sup> Anna Comnena, *The Alexiad*, trans. Elizabeth A. S. Dawes (Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1928), 264.

<sup>18</sup> Anna Comnena, *The Alexiad*.

<sup>19</sup> Tyerman, *How to Plan a Crusade*, 18.

<sup>20</sup> Christopher Marshall, "The Crusading Motivation of the Italian City Republics in the Latin East, 1096–1104," in *The Experience of Crusading: Western Approaches*, Vol. 1, ed. Marcus Bull and Norman Housley (Cambridge University Press, 2003), 194.

<sup>21</sup> Marshall, "The Crusading Motivation of the Italian City Republics in the Latin East, 1096–1104," 194.

<sup>22</sup> Marshall, "The Crusading Motivation of the Italian City Republics in the Latin East, 1096–1104," 195.

crusading leader, ambitious for personal gain.”<sup>23</sup> While it may be true that Bohemond sought to carve out a better earthly position for himself, to label him as more ambitious than others is an unfair representation of crusader motivation. Other sources, such as the *Gesta Francorum*, although likely as biased towards Latin crusaders as Comnena was towards Byzantines, speak of him in a more favorable tone.

The *Gesta Francorum* makes clear the liturgy and scripture that inspired potential pilgrims. The author was fair in his criticisms of his fellow Christians, showing that overzealousness was still criticized by contemporaries.<sup>24</sup> If the only account of these Latin crusaders and their behavior was that of Anna Comnena or other Eastern Christians, it would be easy to label them, as Madden did, as ambitious men seeking violence and gold. The Latin sources, however, paint a very different picture of the actions of the supposedly more noble Alexius: “When the emperor heard that the Turks had inflicted such a defeat on our men he rejoiced greatly.”<sup>25</sup> The author also paints Bohemond in a different tone, referring to the crusaders as pilgrims first and then inquiring about their arms and their war cries as a secondary curiosity.<sup>26</sup> Further, the author says that Bohemond was moved to take the cross by the Holy Spirit, attributing strong religious dedication and piety to Bohemond’s motivation for taking the cross.<sup>27</sup> This document leans in favor of Bohemond, portraying Alexios as the more antagonistic figure during their time together in the East. Such instances present a historiographical challenge—a “he said, she said” dilemma—that requires careful and tentative evaluation.

Christopher Marshall, while talking about crusading motivations of the Italian city republics, says that “It appears the best we can do is attempt to strike a balance between the various spiritual and material forces which prompted men to take the Cross.”<sup>28</sup> Marshall goes on to say that the contemporaries recognized the spiritual side of crusading, which can be expressed by the powerful emotional connections the authors had with the Holy Land.<sup>29</sup> He recognizes that, later, the Italians may have started to become cynical of the religious motivations, as is the case with all of the crusades post-Reformation, yet he makes clear that “spiritual motivation and religious devotion were key factors in the presence of the Italians in the Holy Land.”<sup>30</sup> Marshall further states that early documents and reports show that “commercial interest and religious devotion are found together.”<sup>31</sup> Although this specific passage is referring to Venice in its own crusade in the early twelfth century, it is not beyond reason to attach a unified religious and cultural belief among the Latin Christians throughout Europe.

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<sup>23</sup> Thomas F. Madden, *The Concise History of the Crusades*, 4th ed. (Rowman & Littlefield, 2013), 21.

<sup>24</sup> *Gesta Francorum et aliorum Hierosolymitanorum*, trans. Rosalind Hill (Clarendon Press, 1972), 3.

<sup>25</sup> *Gesta Francorum*, 5.

<sup>26</sup> *Gesta Francorum*, 7.

<sup>27</sup> *Gesta Francorum*, 7–9.

<sup>28</sup> Christopher Marshall, “The Crusading Motivation of the Italian City Republics in the Latin East, 1096–1104,” in *The Experience of Crusading: Western Approaches*, Vol. 1, ed. Marcus Bull and Norman Housley (Cambridge University Press, 2003), 77.

<sup>29</sup> Marshall, “The Crusading Motivation of the Italian City Republics in the Latin East, 1096–1104,” 77.

<sup>30</sup> Marshall, “The Crusading Motivation of the Italian City Republics in the Latin East, 1096–1104,” 77.

<sup>31</sup> Marshall, “The Crusading Motivation of the Italian City Republics in the Latin East, 1096–1104,” 78.

*Defending Richard's Piety in the Third Crusade*

Nearly one hundred years after the First Crusade, Europeans would be called again to recapture the spirit of their ancestors and retake the newly lost kingdom of Jerusalem. What made the First Crusade so interesting was its seemingly perfect arrangement of religious anxiety and need to redirect internal knightly violence from Europe, which allowed it to take root and inspire the Latin crusaders to take the cross. However, the Third Crusade was a more familiar task in the newly formed "institution" of crusading that started to take root in the Church and Europe. There were now more solid foundations set for holy war justifications that developed between the First and Third Crusades. Housley points out that, by 1140, canon law had begun to coalesce into a more mature set of laws for the Church. Housley states that Gratian, a monk of Bologna, compiled these first laws into the *Decretum*, and Gratian faced the same challenge modern historians face when attempting to categorize those who took the Cross.<sup>32</sup> This presents interesting evidence that even contemporaries found it difficult to define and legalize crusading, further increasing the historiographical challenge for the modern historian. R. C. Schwinges notes in his examination of William of Tyre's account of the Latin East that the previously violent attitude towards the crusaders' Muslim foes "was replaced by a more informed, sympathetic and balanced view of the enemy."<sup>33</sup> This presents the idea that crusader behaviors were fluid, and the Latin Christians occupying the Holy Land displayed a high degree of political intelligence in their cooperation with so near an enemy.

However, this cordial political cooperation would end violently with the reclamation of Jerusalem and the loss of the True Cross relic, a Christian defeat at Hattin in 1187. Saladin, founder of the Ayyubid dynasty, unified the Saracens and gave new fire to Latin Christians, exciting some of the most influential historical figures into a religious fervor. One of the most popular figures of the Third Crusade is King Richard I, "The Lionheart." Even Richard I, however, is not exempt from scholarly criticism. One such critique comes from Michael Markowski. Housley points out Markowski's analysis of Richard I's leadership in comparison to the successful campaign of the First Crusade. Markowski argues that "the king was over-cautious in his approach to the issue [and] lacked the religious conviction that in a similar strategic situation had driven the leaders of the First Crusade to press on."<sup>34</sup> I find that this is overly critical of the situation of King Richard I, and it ignores key differences between the First and Third Crusades. There are a few considerations that Markowski omits. First, unlike the First Crusade, which had a larger coalition of barons and knights to bolster the Latin armies, Richard I ultimately ended up alone in the Holy Land. Richard of Devizes, in his chronicle of King Richard I, writes, "Philip, king of the French, having left his companion Richard, king of the English, in the territory of Jerusalem amongst the enemies of the cross of Christ, neither the liberation of the Holy Cross nor the sepulchre being obtained, returned to France."<sup>35</sup> To further counter Markowski's critique of the Lionheart, Richard of Devizes contends that Philip was seemingly the less committed of the two leaders:

The king of the French, with but few, returning home from Acre, left at that place the strength of his army to do nothing, to the command of which he appointed the bishop of Beauvais and the duke of Burgundy. The king of the English, having

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<sup>32</sup> Housley, *Contesting the Crusades*, 52.

<sup>33</sup> Housley, *Contesting the Crusades*, 52.

<sup>34</sup> Housley, *Contesting the Crusades*, 63.

<sup>35</sup> Richard of Devizes, *Chronicle of Richard*, trans. J.A. Giles (George Bell and Sons, 1903), 54.

sent for the commanders of the French, proposed that in the first place they should conjointly attempt Jerusalem itself; but the dissuasion of the French discouraged the hearts of both parties, and dispirited the troops, and restrained the king, thus destitute of men, from his intended march upon that metropolis.<sup>36</sup>

This is an exaggeration against the French from an English-biased source, but it is known that the French did indeed abandon the campaign before reacquiring the True Cross relic and Jerusalem. Housley himself says that the major blow to Saladin's war effort in the Third Crusade was Richard's conquest of Acre and the capture of the Muslim fleet anchored there, indicating that any measure of success enjoyed by the crusade was owed to Richard and his efforts.

Markowski's claim that Richard's lack of religious conviction led to the failure of reclaiming Jerusalem is also problematic. Before it was revealed that an agreement had been reached with Saladin to relinquish Jerusalem to the Muslims, Richard planned to take his small host of mounted knights and die as martyrs to God or succeed in taking Jerusalem.<sup>37</sup> King Richard then went into a "raving" speech, pleading and asking God why he had forsaken Richard in this time of need.<sup>38</sup> The evidence is clear: Richard's first move after such a great loss was to turn to God. He did not lack religious conviction in defeat. Indeed, faith was part of Richard I's motivation to take the cross from the beginning: "So great was the devotion of the man [Richard I], so hastily, so quickly and so speedily did he run, yea fly, to avenge the wrongs of Christ."<sup>39</sup> Here lies the problem. Richard of Devizes makes several claims about Richard I's religious devotion to the Third Crusade. He states on more than one occasion that Richard I was persuaded by divine inspiration to act. He also comments on his immense challenges, lack of support from the French, and the overall failed German campaigns. Yet, Markowski makes a claim that contradicts this evidence. Housley later discusses the methodological problem that Markowski presents in critiquing the end of Richard I's campaign. Housley argues that "intention" is a better tool because "[intention] placed on individuals the onus of self-examination, in the knowledge that God saw all that they thought and did."<sup>40</sup> The idea of intention as a key to historiographical work on crusaders and their motivations is integral to understanding topics like Richard I's religious convictions. Contemporaries believed that God knew their hearts and minds. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that even if they had material ambition, which Richard I likely did, piety was central to the crusader's desire to take the cross. That is not to say some still sought to deceive themselves, however, that claim would be almost impossible to prove. Housley himself states that when it came to crowned rulers, they did not consider it wrong to conquer while "engaged in God's work."<sup>41</sup>

### ***The Enemy Within: The Cathar Heresy***

So far, I have attempted to describe the challenge scholars face while studying crusader motivations against foreign "infidels." Justifying mobilized mass violence against the enemies of God, who were so geographically distant, was a challenge in rhetorical strategy and a great logistical endeavor. However, the field becomes increasingly hard to rationalize in the discussion of the "internal" crusades. Unlike a

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<sup>36</sup> Richard of Devizes, *Chronicle of Richard*, 53.

<sup>37</sup> Richard of Devizes, *Chronicle of Richard*, 75.

<sup>38</sup> Richard of Devizes, *Chronicle of Richard*, 76.

<sup>39</sup> Richard of Devizes, *Chronicle of Richard*, 7.

<sup>40</sup> Housley, *Contesting the Crusades*, 79.

<sup>41</sup> Housley, *Contesting the Crusades*, 84.

foreign enemy with an entirely different religious doctrine and contradictory moral standard as understood by contemporaries, heresy was similar enough in core beliefs that it could lead Christians away from the “correct” teachings of the Church. As Tyerman notes, “While religious war against non-Christians remained easier to justify, claiming divine sanction in battles against co-religionists became commonplace.”<sup>42</sup> Studying clerical justification for attacking fellow Christians or Europeans in the internal crusades seems to undo Urban II’s attempts to redirect internal violence outward. Housley notes that it is “generally accepted” that Innocent III was the first to place crusading into a more structured and coherent “ideological perspective.”<sup>43</sup> This perspective revolved around forming a unified community of Christians, a *Christianitas* or *respublica christiana*.<sup>44</sup> In that context, heresy would soon take on a more menacing face than foreign religions. The more problematic Cathar doctrines were the rejection of the Trinity and the dogmatic acceptance of dualism, a dangerous challenge to the central idea of God in the Catholic faith. Catharism was similar enough in practice to the Catholic faith that had already snared much of Languedoc. One source branded the Cathar teachings in southern France as “lunacy” and called for God to “send his curse on it!”<sup>45</sup> The Cathar heresy seemed to draw the most ire from the Church in the thirteenth century. This is due to the claim that Cathars were using the Gospels against the Roman clergy, albeit “with their own interpretation and according to their abilities.”<sup>46</sup>

In the same document, Bernard states, “they usually say of themselves that they are good Christians,” which gives life to the idea that “they” are being deceitful to non-heretical Christians by claiming to be the same “good Christians.”<sup>47</sup> These claims and other heresies described later in Bernard’s document bred a deeper resentment towards Christian heretics than towards Muslims residing in the Holy Land. As William of Tyre notes, there would be no cooling of tempers and political compromise with the Cathars as there was with the Muslims. Tyerman reinforces this idea by discussing the tactics of the Church to assuage concerns among Christians over fighting fellow Christians. For example, the Church equated the heretics with “less controversial targets” by portraying them as “similar to or worse than ‘Saracens’ or pagans.”<sup>48</sup>

Tyerman admits that the reasons for the Cathar heresy being pushed into the foreground of Church issues are “contested and complex,” which places the Cathar crusade into the same complicated category as the previously discussed conflicts. This idea expands upon Housley’s explanation of the idea of *Christianita*, that canon law and clearer theological definition put Christian uniformity at the top of the clerical agenda. Any deviation or challenge to that uniformity of law or ritual, then, was “more obvious and more dangerous.”<sup>49</sup> Other scholars have been far more critical of Innocent III and his crusading reformations, specifically after his political *casus belli* against Markward of Anweiler, which led to those critics creating a “political crusade”

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<sup>42</sup> Christopher Tyerman, *The World of the Crusades* (Yale University Press, 2019), 334.

<sup>43</sup> Housley, *Contesting the Crusades*, 55.

<sup>44</sup> Housley, *Contesting the Crusades*, 55.

<sup>45</sup> William of Tudela, “Song of the Cathar Wars,” in *The Crusades: A Reader*, 2nd ed., ed. S.J. Allen and Emilie Amt (University of Toronto Press, 2014), 239.

<sup>46</sup> Bernard of Gui, “Manual for Inquisitors,” in *The Crusades: A Reader*, 2nd ed., ed. S.J. Allen and Emilie Amt (University of Toronto Press, 2014), 235.

<sup>47</sup> Bernard of Gui, “Manual for Inquisitors,” 235.

<sup>48</sup> Tyerman, *The World of the Crusades*, 337.

<sup>49</sup> Tyerman, *The World of the Crusades*, 339.

category.<sup>50</sup> I disagree with this categorization, as this paper repeatedly demonstrates that previous crusades, including the First Crusade—often held as the “standard” for crusading—had significant political elements. Riley Smith made it methodologically possible to examine the crusades against Christian heretics alongside those fought against non-Christians “without any sign of the usual cargo of condemnation.”<sup>51</sup> There is also far more evidence of the Albigensian Crusade being forced on Innocent III, considering that he at first attempted less directly violent solutions that were refused. Innocent wielded excommunication as the primary tool to try and root out the Cathars, as well as offering papal protection of person and property to those who fought the heretics in Southern France.<sup>52</sup> The Cathars were so entrenched in Languedoc that Innocent III hesitated to declare a full crusade until the assassination of his legate, Peter of Castelnau, justified mobilizing the full crusading apparatus against them.<sup>53</sup>

The Albigensian Crusade again presents the challenge of how to categorize motivations and separate religious intentions from secular or political ones. Along with the contemporary challenge of preaching the crusade against fellow Christians, there is the modern challenge to determine whether crusader intentions were religious or if the war was an opportunity for local lords or kings to press their claims on the soon-to-be-available Southern French lands. Just as in the previous crusades, I argue that there is no need to separate the motivations, as both are simultaneously reasonable in the context, which Tyerman maps out clearly. The rhetoric surrounding the Albigensian Crusade was meant to “elevate the war” and place the heretics on the same level of importance as the enemies in the Holy Land crusades.<sup>54</sup> Tyerman details those who had an interest in material gain from this crusade: local counts and lords in Southern France and the kings of Aragon, France, and England. Each had claims to lordship over the region and the papacy, whose “policy never lost sight of wider international implications.”<sup>55</sup> Tyerman goes on to explain the religious motivations without separating the two ideas, stating, “The objective of extirpating heresy provided a raw, at times vicious religiosity, inciting, if chroniclers can be believed, often fanatically barbarous ferocity in treating opponents and captives.”<sup>56</sup> Housley states that the reactions to the Albigensian Crusade by contemporaries varied considerably, saying that coercion was viewed as the wrong response, or that the “crusaders from northern France were driven by greed rather than zeal for the faith.”<sup>57</sup> As before, the appropriate tool to use in this case is intention, or *intentio recta*, as intention plays a central role in understanding the combined secular and religious ideology of the Albigensian Crusade.<sup>58</sup>

### ***Conclusion***

Conducting a study on motivations, even with access to modern subjects, presents a challenge in distinguishing stated intentions from ulterior motives. When this task is further complicated by relying solely on written documents from centuries past, the endeavor becomes nearly impossible. The limitations of historical sources—often colored by bias, incomplete narratives, or the influence of the era in which they were

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<sup>50</sup> Housley, *Contesting the Crusades*, 116.

<sup>51</sup> Housley, *Contesting the Crusades*, 119.

<sup>52</sup> Tyerman, *The World of the Crusades*, 344.

<sup>53</sup> Tyerman, *The World of the Crusades*, 344.

<sup>54</sup> Tyerman, *The World of the Crusades*, 345.

<sup>55</sup> Tyerman, *The World of the Crusades*, 345.

<sup>56</sup> Tyerman, *The World of the Crusades*, 345.

<sup>57</sup> Housley, *Contesting the Crusades*, 120121.

<sup>58</sup> Housley, *Contesting the Crusades*, 121.

written—pose formidable barriers to definitive conclusions. Despite Housley and Tyerman’s extensive contributions, the discourse in this field remains fluid, with their interpretations subject to debate, refinement, and expansion as new perspectives and evidence become known. The nuanced blend of religious and secular ideology in medieval Europe presents a challenge that may never be fully resolved. It is certainly a topic that cannot be fully explored in such a narrow scope as provided by this paper. However, it should provide some understanding of the specific challenges that arise in this scholarly pursuit. To medieval contemporaries, the idea that warfare against “enemies” of God had no contradictions with religious moral values. There was still some religious anxiety about holy war, and to some, it would still contradict their understanding of pious behavior. However, through rhetorical skill, figures like Pope Urban II steered these anxieties into devotional oaths of pilgrimage and soldiery. Questions remain regarding how deeply penitential motivations resonated across different social classes or how regional political interests may have influenced crusade rhetoric and participation. How did the militant religious orders, such as the Knights Templar or Hospitallers, function in the context of a deeply religious society? Did these religious orders deploy their own set of rituals and ceremonies, and how did they navigate the complex unification of their military purpose with their religious devotions? As the field evolves, each new insight into the crusader mindset not only brings us closer to understanding the medieval world but also enriches our view of human experience itself, shaped by motivations both seen and unseen.

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# DESIRING ARABS: A Damning Condemnation or an Unwarranted Postcolonial Criticism?

Hoochang Yi

Joseph Massad's *Desiring Arabs* details the rise of homophobia in the modern Arab world – a region where sexual plurality flourished prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Using a post-colonialist framework, Massad faults the rise of orientalism and its subsequent consequences as the root of homophobia in the Middle East. Massad draws heavily from Edward Said's *Orientalism*, focusing his discussion on the interactions between Western works on the orient and the Arab world to be a catalyst of homophobic attitudes that spurred in 20<sup>th</sup> century Arab academia. *Desiring Arabs* could therefore be seen as the continuation of Said's *Orientalism*.<sup>1</sup>

In arguing that '[t]he Orient was orientalized,' Said meant that the act of prescribing the category of the 'Orient' by the Occident (the Westerner) to those the Occident implicitly assumed to be fundamentally inferior.<sup>2</sup> However, through the fiery medium of Joseph Massad's *Desiring Arabs*, which matches the tone of his mentor, the phrase is given a new meaning. Orientalism is predicated on the assumption that the Occident is constantly positionally superior to the Orient. Following Massad's extensive study, one comes to understand Said differently.<sup>3</sup> The Orient has been orientalized as the Orient comes to accept the positional superiority of the Occident. Massad writes:

[T]he struggle of modern Arabs, as far as the archive we surveyed indicates, is to prove to all Arabs and *all Europeans* that Arabs are *just like* Europeans in civilisational and cultural terms, even though Europeans insist on treating Arabs as lesser than they.<sup>4</sup>

The European still maintains the authoritative judgement in deciding who the civilised *are*, with the Arabs failing to meet this standard. Further, in the mind of the Arab, the European remain a goal for the Arab to be *like*.

It is the detailing of this phenomenon, the internalisation and the tacit acceptance of fundamental Orientalist principles by the Orient, that makes *Desiring Arabs* a worthy successor of Said's *Orientalism*. Yet Massad's work should not be judged solely in orbit of Said's; it has a life of its own. It is a historical work which utilises the approach of *Orientalism* to show the history of and the changing attitude to homosexuality in the Middle East; investigating the sharp change from Abu Nuwas' sexually explicit Ghazal, homoerotic, poetry to the Queen Boat case, where the Egyptian authority brutally raided a gay hangout with those arrested, was perceived

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<sup>1</sup>*Orientalism*, as a concept, has stamped its place as a crucial tool in post-colonialist historiography. Roughly, 'orientalism' describes the *othering* of non-western cultures and peoples via the prescription of inferiority and a hyperbolic fascination with the 'exotic.' With the 'exotic' sexual cultures of the 'orient' inspiring particularly salient attractions from the sexually closeted Westerners.

<sup>2</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (Penguin Press, 1979), 6.

<sup>3</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 7.

<sup>4</sup> Joseph A. Massad, *Desiring Arabs* (University of Chicago Press, 2007), 417.

as a threat to Egyptian sovereignty and identity.<sup>5</sup> Massad achieves this by utilising a range of Arabic sources from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The first chapter, *Anxiety in Civilisation*, details both the shock and shame of the Arabs as Europe came to dominate the world through colonisation. The civilisation that had rivalled and surpassed Europe for centuries was now falling behind it, beginning the adoption of Orientalist principles. The thought that this adoption would ensure the modernisation of the Arab world allowed them to ‘catch up’ to the West. Subsequently, difficulty arose in dealing with the great yet homoerotic poet, Abu Nuwas, who came to represent the degeneracy of pre-orientalised Arab culture. The next chapter, *Remembrances of Desires Past*, shows the construction of a new history, a new civilisation of the ‘Arab world’ by Arab scholars according to the ‘modernity’ model of the West, which involved purging and dismissing contents that indicated the ‘deviancy’ of the Arab world.<sup>6</sup> *Re-Orienting Desire* is perhaps the most controversial chapter of this book, with Massad following Foucault’s analysis in that there were homosexual acts in the Middle East but no homosexuals. The West’s incitement to discourse, led by the ‘Gay International,’ of prescribing homosexual identity to homosexual acts in the Arab world, led Islamists and Arab nationalists to frame homosexuality as a neo-colonial import which threatened Arab sovereignty. Chapter four, *Sins, Crime and Disease*, further utilises Foucauldian analysis to detail the creation of *sexual deviance* in the Arab world through jurisprudential, criminological and medical books (especially focusing on the AIDS crisis), further eliminating queerness from the Arab world. In *Deviant Fictions*, the penultimate chapter, details the depiction of homosexuality in Arab literature from the 1940s to the 1980s. It relates colonial interaction to existing sexual desires. The final chapter, *The Truth of Fictional Desires*, investigates post-1980s literature where homosexual rape of an Arab by a European allegorically shows the humiliation of colonisation and corporatism. The key point of analysis is the allegorical homosexual rape illustrating the Western treatment of the Arab world.

Massad’s monograph has a range yet subtle depth. It is a historiographical work that analyses the historical approach of the ‘modernised’ Arab historians. From Marxist historians to psychoanalysts, Massad uses various historians from the 20<sup>th</sup> century to illustrate the full internalisation of Western concepts of modernity, degeneration and *turath* (culture). These historians use these concepts to condemn the degeneracy of Arab history, illustrating the internalisation of Orientalism within the Orient. Meanwhile, this historical work investigates the emergence of homosexuality as a concept in the Arab world and its social status through the analysis of literature. The book particularly utilises Foucault and Said, with Foucault helping Massad to explain the rise of homophobia through medicalisation and Said helping to explain the internalisation of Orientalism by the Orient leading to homophobia.<sup>7</sup> It is also a political work that penalises the West for its continuation of Orientalist assumption in wishing to liberate the hidden gays of the Middle East, which, in turn, helped characterise the ‘Gay International’ as the vanguard of Western neo-imperialism.

Though an impressive work of history and politics, Massad’s Foucauldian analysis appears to be unwarranted in the case of homosexuals in the Middle East. The concept of homosexuality existed in the Middle East prior to Western

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<sup>5</sup> Nicola Pratt, “The Queen Boat Case in Egypt: Sexuality, National Security and State Sovereignty,” *Review of International Studies* 33, no.1 (2007): 129-144.

<sup>6</sup> Massad, *Desiring Arabs*, 99-159.

<sup>7</sup> Medicalisation refers to the understanding of certain phenomena strictly through a medical lens. The most prominent example is the categorisation of homosexuality as a mental illness.

Medicalisation. Ibn Sina noted that *ubnah*, the submissive role in homosexual sex, was a state of being, not just an act.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, Massad's previous argument that homosexual actions in the Arab world had no identity is incorrect. It was not just action, there were set identities that predated Western medicalisation by centuries. Stephen O. Murray describes the dismissal of the concept of homosexuality in non-western regions before Western medicalisation as a Western *will not to know* that such a concept existed before the West could think of it.<sup>9</sup> Thus, Massad's central claim in *Re-Orienting Desires*, that homosexuality as a concept was imported from the West, appears to be incorrect and mistaken.

Another potential criticism of Massad is his overuse of Orientalism. Katherine Dalacoura argues that, by depriving the Arab world of the concept of modernity, and hence homosexuality, Massad unjustly detaches the history of the Middle East from Europe and disregards the discourse between the Occident and the Orient.<sup>10</sup> This detachment leads Massad to see the discourse around homosexuality in the Middle East to be decided by 'Western actors, not the people of the Middle East.'<sup>11</sup> Dalacoura argues that the Arab historians, writers and commentators mentioned in *Desiring Arabs* are portrayed to be a medium for Western concepts and ideas rather than self-acting agents who spoke and wrote for themselves.

The original and incisive addition to the study of Orientalism that Massad provides – that Orientalist principles were internalised – dually robs Arab actors of their responsibility and agency as Massad sees their actions to always be a reaction to the West. Rahul Rao further extends this line of criticism by illuminating the concerning ways in which Massad writes of homosexuals in the Arab world who align themselves with the Gay International. Rao writes:

there is also something deeply troubling about his denial of agency and subjectivity of Arabs [...] in their struggles for sexual self-determination' and by implicitly denying their locality, Massad has essentially reduced homosexual identification in the Arab world as 'buying the latest Calvin Klein underwear.'<sup>12</sup>

In the interconnected world that we live in today, by condemning the 'Gay International' as a force of Western Imperialism and those who identify themselves as Gays as local informants, Massad is severing the discourse around homosexuality between the Occident and the Orient. Massad seems to be attempting to purge the Occident out of the Orient. He vilifies those who are not pure Orientals and thus reinforces the 'communitarian authenticity narratives that police how sexual preferences *ought* to be expressed.'<sup>13</sup> Thus, Massad's Orientalist line of inquiry seems to unjustly detach the Occident from the Orient and his post-colonial tendencies seem to have him isolate the two worlds from each other.<sup>14</sup> Further, Massad seems to disregard the agency of the Orient, specifically the gays of the Orient world, seeing the latter as a colonial import that needs to either be purged or ignored to purify the Orient from the Occident. This could be seen as essentialising the Orient, a process which Said directly wrote against.

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<sup>8</sup> Stephen O. Murray, "The Will not to Know," in *Islamic Homosexualities*, ed. Stephen O. Murray and Will Ruscoe (New York University Press, 1997), 29.

<sup>9</sup> Murray, "The Will not to Know," 14-55.

<sup>10</sup> Katerina Dalacoura, "Homosexuality as a Cultural Battleground in the Middle East: Culture and Postcolonial International Theory," *Third World Quarterly* 35, no. 7 (2014): 1290-1306.

<sup>11</sup> Dalacoura, "Homosexuality as a Cultural Battleground in the Middle East," 1290-1306.

<sup>12</sup> Rahul Rao, *Third World Protest: Between Home and World* (Oxford University Press, 2010), 176-177.

<sup>13</sup> Rao, *Third World Protest*, 176-177.

<sup>14</sup> Dalacoura, *Homosexuality as a Cultural Battleground in the Middle East*.

These issues in *Desiring Arabs* do not, however, take away from the insight that it provides. Rao, Dalacoura and other commentators hostile to Massad all recognise the level of truth found in his analysis. Further, Massad's work is an important piece of historiography of the Arab world. This was the first work which has specifically analysed the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century historiography of the Arab world through the lens of sexuality. Though there are extensive histories of Islamic sexualities, with a notable work being Stephen O. Murray and Will Roscoe's *Islamic Sexualities*, very few, if any, have detailed the reasons for the rise of homophobia in the Arab world to the extent that Massad has. Moreover, his book prompted flourishing discourse, as with Rao and Dalacoura, which has expanded the discussion on sexuality in the contemporary Arab world and the Western approaches to it.<sup>15</sup> Finally, as Massad analyses Arabic texts to demonstrate his points, the book provides a rare opportunity for those who are not proficient in Arabic to gain access to Arabic literature.

Overall, *Desiring Arabs* is a key work in the historiography of Orientalism, sexuality, and Arab historiography. It is an essential read for those interested in the history of sexuality in the Arab world. Whether it is an unwanted bump in the road of Arab homosexual historiography or an incisive historical work that is also an *exposé* of Western actors, is for the reader to decide.

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<sup>15</sup>Nicole Kilgerman, "Homosexuality in Islam: A Difficult Paradox," *Macalester Islam Journal* 2, no. 3 (2007): 52-64.

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