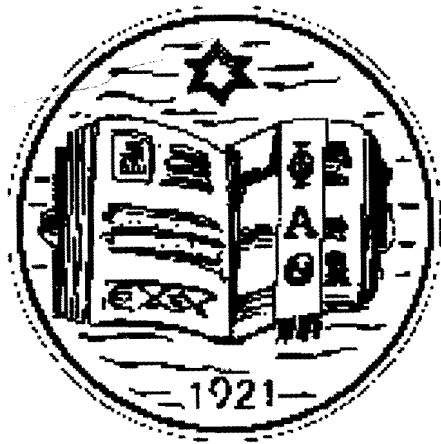


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**“We Wanted Big Change”:
Oretha Castle Haley and the Civil Rights Movement in New Orleans**

by: Victoria Barreto

This paper was awarded the Loyola University History Award for Outstanding History Senior Thesis for the 2003-2004 Academic Year.

The story of Oretha Castle Haley is the story of the Civil Rights Movement in New Orleans. Her energy, coupled with the drive of those working alongside her, was devoted to the cause of equality for all citizens of New Orleans, black and white. Opposition from outside groups and divisions among activists themselves were no match for Oretha Castle Haley's uncompromising leadership. She may be best known for her activism in the 1960s, but her leadership continued until her death in 1987. With her forceful personality, she shaped the struggle for civil rights in New Orleans, demonstrating that nothing—including gender, racial, or ideological considerations—would affect her mission to achieve civil rights for African-Americans in New Orleans.

Oretha Castle was born in Oakland, Tennessee, in 1939, among poor blacks.¹ Her family moved to New Orleans in 1947, and Oretha attended Joseph S. Clark High School.² Much of her childhood and adolescence was therefore deeply rooted in a city where segregation was the norm, including in schools, restaurants, stores, streetcars, buses, and hospitals. The Castle family, including Virgie and John and their three children, Oretha, Doris, and Johnny, would witness stark changes that would affect all of the Deep South. Times would change drastically in the next two decades.

New Orleans has a unique racial history. The city had been a conduit for slaves, crops, and other products from the interior of North America and derived much of its influence as a major port on the Mississippi River. Blacks and free persons of color have been a distinctive part of the city since the 18th century. Whites and blacks in Louisiana entered into liaisons that produced racially mixed children. These children became the core of the Creole population of Louisiana, especially in New Orleans. The unique racial mix of New Orleans affected the way civil rights groups developed in the 1960s. Racial dynamics in New Orleans continued to have a great impact, especially as racial inequalities began to take center stage in the 1960s.

In 1954, the Supreme Court struck down the heart of Jim Crow. The *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, decision declared that the separate but equal doctrine of segregated facilities for blacks and whites was illegal. The decision applied primarily to education, but the South quickly saw the impact for the rest of their segregated institutions. Pro-Jim Crow groups made plans to stop the coming

¹ G. Okyeame Haley to Victoria Barreto, Interview by author, 18 February 2004.

² _____. “AARC: Notable African Americans From Louisiana: Oretha Castle Haley.” <http://nutrias.org/~nopl/info/aarchinfo/notabl12.htm>. Accessed 14 November 2003.

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movement for equal civil rights for whites and blacks. Still, the quest for change reached all areas of the South, including the seemingly harmonious city of New Orleans.

Blacks in New Orleans quickly realized the significance of the *Brown* case. The black community had a Supreme Court victory to back up their claims for civil rights. While New Orleans' city leaders pushed for calm, civil rights groups began the drive for change. This was not done without controversy. New Orleans' economy was built around tourism, which would suffer from negative publicity stemming from violence between whites and African-Americans. Activists began targeting segregation through direct action.

The new generation of activists began to act decisively in 1960 to begin the process of desegregation in New Orleans. Their first target was Dryades Street, a primarily black shopping district in uptown New Orleans. Most of the businesses on Dryades Street were owned by whites and frequented by blacks. Lolis Elie was an attorney for the civil rights protesters in New Orleans for the law firm of Collins, Douglas, and Elie. As he states, blacks were almost never employed above the broom-and-mop level in an area where they were the main customers.³ Black activists led by the Consumer's League of Greater New Orleans began picketing Dryades Street, protesting these discriminatory policies.⁴

Buoyed by the support of a significant number of young black and white people, the League boycotted the businesses on Dryades Street, targeting an important area of discrimination in direct fashion. The Consumer's League urged blacks, “DO NOT buy where YOU or YOUR children who will come after you cannot work FIRST-CLASS.”⁵ As a result of the boycott, the shops on Dryades Street were empty.⁶ The action in this case was one of the first demonstrations of the power of civil rights activists in New Orleans. A new group of protesters took shape, composed of young people and students from all over the city, including Rudolph Lombard, Oretha and Doris Castle, Jerome Smith, and Sidney Goldfinch. Many of these were young people that met and organized for the first time during the Dryades Street boycott and soon organized a chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) in the fall of 1960.

There are many theories about the generation that began to act decisively to change the system of race in America. Their childhood and adolescent years were spent in a system that degraded and humiliated them and still sent them off to war as part of the so-called arsenal for democracy of Second World War. Upon their return, many were educated under the terms of the GI Bill, but all returned to a country torn by racial segregation. Activism was new to many of them, but they were buoyed by their belief in the moral superiority of their activism. “The people who were involved with each other in the [19]60s,” commented Haley in 1978,

³ Lolis Elie to Victoria Barreto, Interview by author, 13 January 2004.

⁴ _____. CORE Films, Reel 20, File 44. Courtesy Amistad Research Center, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA.

⁵ Ibid. (Emphasis in the document)

⁶ Mitchell, Dr. Henry, quoted in Rogers, Kim Lacy, *Righteous Lives: Narratives of the New Orleans Civil Rights Movement* (New York: New York University Press, 1993), p. 68.

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“there was a certain kind of bond that developed, I guess, out of the commitment that you had to do what you were doing.”⁷ Their commitment to civil rights outweighed any fear they might have felt in risking their lives, security, jobs, and freedom for the struggle. These activists were also much more radical in their outlook and tactics. Jerome Smith, Rudolph (Rudy) Lombard, Oretha and Doris Castle, Joyce Taylor, Doratha Smith, and others formed the core of a group of young intellectuals that saw America in a different light than did their parents and grandparents. Sidney “Lanny” Goldfinch, a young white activist in New Orleans during the formation of CORE, states, “So, my guess is that the Second World War, a lot of the activity that soldiers had in the Second World War, started...put a lot of pressure at that level. They were no longer willing as a group to take a second class.”⁸ Many of the activists of the early 1960s were intellectually driven students. As Lolis Elie states, “We acted and then we read.”⁹ Protesters within CORE were committed to principles of non-violence and felt a moral superiority that stemmed from their dedication to achieving civil rights without violence or confrontation. As a result, they also came into direct conflict with the violent domination with which many whites had controlled and intimidated blacks in the past.

Protesters during the 1960s worked for goals they did not know if they could achieve. As they grew older, civil rights activists realized that their work did not target the true issues lying below the surface of discrimination. As Oretha Haley stated, activists worked for human dignity and the manifestations of that dignity that translated into physical realities such as sitting at a lunch counter or in a streetcar.¹⁰ The implications of what gaining that human dignity entailed was not something that was immediately clear to many of the young activists of the 1960s; later, it also became clear that activist groups did not agree on how to gain those rights.

CORE initiated sit-in and picketing campaigns in several areas of the South. CORE activists in New Orleans replicated tactics used elsewhere in the South during this time, including in Greensboro, North Carolina. Such action was controversial because it was a direct and very public challenge to the Southern segregationist leadership. Direct action also demonstrated the willingness of activists to be jailed and face the full brunt of legal opposition in order to open public accommodations for use by all citizens. CORE thus provided a voice for young activists who wished to publicly condemn segregation but did not necessarily have the resources to do so in traditional ways. Goldfinch states, “We didn't have the moxie to be talking with the business leaders of the city, you know...So, we could go down and do something public, like with the sit-ins, and that was something we were capable of doing.”¹¹ New Orleans activists also knew

⁷ Oretha Castle Haley to Kim Lacy Rogers, 27 November 1978. Courtesy Kim Lacy Rogers/Glenda B. Stevens Oral History Collection, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA.

⁸ Goldfinch to Barreto.

⁹ Elie to Barreto.

¹⁰ Haley to Rogers.

¹¹ Goldfinch to Barreto.

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that more public action would put increasing pressure on city leaders, forcing the political and economic leaders of New Orleans to address CORE's concerns.¹²

Blacks in New Orleans were by no means politically homogenous. For example, Oretha Haley commented about activists working with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored Peoples (NAACP), “Of course, they felt this was real kind of militant and radical action—to be talking about sitting in and all that kind of stuff. And they really didn't want to have any of it.”¹³ For the NAACP, who worked to secure legal victories such as that of the *Brown* case, direct action was dangerous, radical, and counterproductive. They urged students in CORE to hold back on sitting in and demonstrating publicly. Activists within CORE had to deal with differing preferences within the black community. These differences in strategy continued to pose numerous challenges for black leaders and activists such as Oretha Haley, who nevertheless directly challenged the system of officially sanctioned inequality in New Orleans.

Sitters-in began to attack segregated public accommodations in New Orleans in the fall of 1960. The application for New Orleans' CORE chapter states, “We are now working on our major project and first. The Sit-In Demonstration.”¹⁴ On September 17, 1960, Castle, Rudy Lombard, Cecil Carter, and Lanny Goldfinch sat in at the McCrory's Five and Ten lunch counter reserved for whites, about one week after the first New Orleans sit in at the Woolworth's counter on Canal Street on September 9, 1960. Oretha commented, “The customers were startled. I mean, they just had never seen blacks and whites sitting in the section that had heretofore been reserved for white customers.”¹⁵ The sit-in accomplished two goals. First, activists realized the power of their actions in the heart of the city. Lolis Elie comments, “When we got down to Canal Street, we now had implications for the tourists, and we were maturing by then.”¹⁶ Secondly, by sitting in at McCrory's, the four students challenged an order by New Orleans Mayor deLesseps “Chep” Morrison banning demonstrations and picketing in favor of civil rights. It was the most radical action taken yet for civil rights. Morrison had pleaded with the black community: “. . . I am asking all of the respectable, honest and solid Negro citizens of New Orleans to take steps to stop those of their race who are acting against the overall good of the community.”¹⁷ The national McCrory's corporation also cooperated with the city's order, establishing an official policy of formally asking the protesters to leave their premises. When the protesters refused, the police would then have cause to arrest the demonstrators. The four CORE protesters at the McCrory's lunch counter explicitly contested the legitimacy of Morrison's ban

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and the accompanying actions taken by the national McCrory's company to control the effects of civil rights activists. .

The four sitters-in were arrested and jailed. Lanny Goldfinch, the only white activist at the sit-in at McCrory's, was charged with criminal anarchy; the other students were charged with criminal mischief, according to an October article in the *Louisiana Weekly*.¹⁸ According to New Orleans' *States-Item*, the four were also charged with “remaining in a business place after being ordered to leave.”¹⁹ Goldfinch left jail almost immediately; he was a graduate student and instructor at Tulane University and taught classes there.²⁰ Oretha Castle and Rudy Lombard made a pact to stay in jail. One of Oretha's closest family members died shortly after she entered jail. Elie states, “Oretha refused to come out of jail until she met with Rudy to get him to accept the fact that she would not stay in. . .”²¹ Oretha left jail, but demonstrated her dedication to the struggle for civil rights in New Orleans in the process. Elie states, “This is where Oretha emerges [as a leader].”²² She began to play a very active part in organizing activity and leading activists in New Orleans.

Castle threw herself into her work as an activist, but there were economic and community pressures placed on activists. Following the sit-in at McCrory's, Oretha lost her job at Hotel Dieu Hospital.²³ Like many civil rights activists, Oretha was shunned by a white world that saw her activism as radical, inflammatory, and threatening. Blacks also often had to fight against apathy within the black community. Elie states, “. . . White people had set it up in such a way that they had practically convinced many of the “establishment”-type African-Americans that this was the way things were and that there was nothing that could be done about it.”²⁴ Centuries of domination by an oppressive white majority had convinced some blacks that change was not possible and that a drive for change was not desirable. According to Elie, some blacks were convinced by white leaders, including New Orleans mayor deLesseps Morrison, that New Orleans was a more reasonable place, a better place for race relations, and the city indeed seemed more harmonious than other cities in the South.²⁵ As Goldfinch states, activists in New Orleans were not always welcomed by the black community. “And there were some families who were opposed to their children being involved because they would get embarrassed if they [their children] would go to jail.”²⁶ Sometimes the most cautious audience for CORE activists during the early 1960s was the population

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Rogers, 113.

¹⁴ _____, “Application for Affiliation,” CORE Films Archive, Reel 20. File 44. Courtesy Amistad Research Center, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA.

¹⁵ *A House Divided*, produced and directed by Burwell Ware, Xavier University of New Orleans, videocassette. Courtesy Xavier University of New Orleans.

¹⁶ Elie to Barreto.

¹⁷ _____, “Negroes Stage Protest March,” *The Times-Picayune*, 20 September 1960, Sec. 3, p. 4.

¹⁸ _____, “4 of CORE Plead Not Guilty, Ask Speedy Trial,” *Louisiana Weekly*, 15 October 1963, pp. 1, 7.

¹⁹ _____, “4 Charged in Sit-In,” *States-Item*, 21 September 1960, p. 19.

²⁰ Goldfinch to Barreto.

²¹ Elie to Barreto.

²² Ibid.

²³ Rogers, Kim Lacy, *Righteous Lives: Narratives of the New Orleans Civil Rights Movement* (New York: New York University Press, 1993), 126-127; see also *A House Divided*.

²⁴ Elie to Barreto.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Goldfinch to Barreto.

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that stood to benefit the most from action against segregation. The young activists of CORE, however, sought to dispel the myths of racial acceptance in New Orleans and continued to act fervently.

Lombard v. Louisiana, the appeal of the four students' convictions in the McCrory's sit-ins, reached the Supreme Court in 1962. The Court ruled in 1963 that the actions of the McCrory's chain and New Orleans authorities, including Mayor Morrison's ban of sit-ins and other protests, constituted state action and was an unconstitutional protection of segregationist policies. This case undercut the right of states and companies to refuse service to African-Americans. The *Louisiana Weekly*, a traditionally black New Orleans newspaper, reported, “In the New Orleans case, the court broadened the rule to ban convictions whenever state or local officials have publicly condemned sit-ins in advance.”²⁷ The justices agreed that the actions of Morrison and the McCrory's store, which established a policy of officially asking the demonstrators to leave the premises, constituted an unconstitutional collusion that deliberately violated the civil rights of protesters and African-Americans in general. Goldfinch states, “And that was the deal that they had made [the store officially asking the protesters to leave the premises]... that the city fathers had made with the national McCrory's people... So, the city was not doing anything on its own initiative to stop this...”²⁸ Private business had been protected by city authorities but would no longer be able to hide behind the protection of police, at least not in the eyes of the law. Civil rights activists attracted enough attention to worry the economic leaders of the city.

Business leaders tried to bargain with black activists and leaders.²⁹ Goldfinch states, “The whole big thing with New Orleans finally getting integration, breaking down the wall, had to do with the businesspeople didn't want to ruin business in New Orleans. It had nothing to do with any principles or morals, stuff like that. It was just almost secondary.”³⁰ City officials worked to keep protesters from disrupting the city's tourism industry. New Orleans' leaders accepted desegregation therefore because it reinforced the city's positive image in front of much of the outside world. Civil rights activists were not convinced, however, that radical change was coming.

CORE activists had never expected or wanted to act through the courts or the legal system. Goldfinch states, “Our idea—Congress of Racial Equality's initial idea—didn't have to do with taking things to court... It was shifted to that later on when the lawyers got involved.”³¹ Younger activists such as those in CORE looked for broad social action that would bring change quickly. Rudy Lombard comments, “We wanted big change. We wanted it all... We didn't want to compromise.”³² Additionally, CORE activists did not believe that the *Lombard*

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decision necessarily changed the fate of blacks in America or activists who were working for their civil freedom. Oretha Castle commented to the press, “We don't feel that the decision should necessarily cause Negroes to believe that great progress has been accomplished. America is in a sad state when it is necessary for the highest court to be obliged to rule that business establishments cannot bar patrons because of race or color.”³³ She did, however, express hope that more establishments would open their doors to blacks without court orders or demonstrations.³⁴ While the CORE group had never expected or lobbied for the legal system to support its cause, the *Lombard* decision was nonetheless a watershed moment in the civil rights struggle in New Orleans, and civil rights activists came away with an important victory in the Supreme Court.

Oretha Castle was the leader of a movement that was continually developing itself. Elie states, “You know, no one had ever suggested to us that we were going to provide leadership, and we were not conscious of the fact, at least I wasn't, that we were replacing the old-line Negro leadership...”³⁵ Castle's gender was never an issue, either, and she clearly made an impact on the activist community. Elie states, “There were no women who were playing any leadership roles in the Civil Rights Movement [in New Orleans] prior to Oretha.”³⁶ Several women became actively involved in the CORE group and in other civil rights campaigns in the early 1960s, and Oretha's example is representative of their role as leaders among the activists, irrespective of their gender. Oretha Castle was a delegate to CORE's National Action Committee.³⁷ Castle was just one of a number of important female activists in New Orleans, however. Her sister, Doris Jean Castle, was a Freedom Rider and an active demonstrator in New Orleans; Doratha Smith, Ruth Despenza, Sandra Nixon, and other female activists also played active roles in securing civil rights for blacks in New Orleans. Elie comments, “I mean, these [women] were people who had no fear.”³⁸ These activists were just as active as their male counterparts and were eager to participate in the Civil Rights Movement, even if they would suffer from hardships or even death. Young people like Castle did take charge of direct actions in New Orleans, however, soon unleashing a fury of activity in the city, both on the streets and in the courts.

Oretha became president of the New Orleans chapter of CORE in 1961.³⁹ She led New Orleans' CORE during a particularly difficult time for the group. Rogers writes, “Very quickly, racial tensions simmered within the chapter, due to two developments—interracial dating, and the whites' attempts to dominate the

²⁷ _____. “Supreme Court Action Clears Four Students,” *Louisiana Weekly*, 25 May 1963, p. 1.

²⁸ Goldfinch to Barreto.

²⁹ *A House Divided*.

³⁰ Goldfinch to Barreto.

³¹ *Ibid*.

³² *A House Divided*.

³³ _____. “Supreme Court Action Clears Four Students,” *Louisiana Weekly*, 25 May 1963, sec. 1, p. 7.

³⁴ *Ibid*.

³⁵ Elie to Barreto.

³⁶ *Ibid*.

³⁷ _____. “National Action Committee As of 1962 Convention,” CORE Films Archive, Reel 2, File 25. Courtesy Amistad Research Center, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA.

³⁸ Elie to Barreto

³⁹ Rogers, 142.

decision-making processes of the group."⁴⁰ With respect to leadership positions in New Orleans CORE, tension between whites and blacks within CORE was especially problematic. Elie states, "It wouldn't surprise you to know that white people—the best of them and the best of the white people in this world were in CORE in my judgment—none of these people had any experience taking orders from African-Americans."⁴¹ The deep racial divides between races in the US were reinforced by more than three hundred years of slavery and almost one hundred years of officially sanctioned separation between whites and blacks. When the Civil Rights Movement began, white and black activists had marched and acted together. It was an interracial group of students, for example, that initiated the sit-ins on Canal Street in 1960. As early as 1961 and 1962, however, whites and blacks within the CORE were struggling themselves with questions of leadership and influence.

Additionally, reports of interracial dating within New Orleans' CORE changed the group's perception in the eyes of the public, and this particularly worried Oretha Castle. She stated, "The word was that the CORE chapter was where you could come into contact with black women without any problems."⁴² As Rogers writes, these relationships were more than interracial demonstrations of affection; in Castle's estimation, "[the interracial relationships were] simply a replay of the white male's traditional exploitation of black women, and had nothing to do with...what the struggle itself was about."⁴³ Reports of partying within the CORE chapter pushed Castle and the group's membership committee to expel the white activists and their African-American liaisons from the group. The national CORE organization sent Richard Haley to New Orleans to organize the Freedom Rides and to resolve the interracial tensions that rankled New Orleans' CORE. He found Oretha Castle determined to preserve the integrity of CORE in New Orleans and protect the purity of the actions undertaken by its members. Eventually, some of those who were expelled from CORE in New Orleans were allowed back into the group, but Castle had acted firmly with her belief in the purity of the movement.⁴⁴ Castle was not at all hesitant to remove whites from CORE, though such a move would have certainly created a strong backlash even within the organization itself. Elie states, "She was damn near done with it...Oretha was ahead of that game. Way ahead of it."⁴⁵ Oretha Castle once again demonstrated that her leadership was uncompromising, even if it would cause controversy. Castle was willing to rend the interracial group built during the Dryades Street boycotts and the sit-ins on Canal Street if it meant keeping New Orleans' CORE group on the track that she and other black leaders believed in.

While other groups may have fallen apart at this time, Castle kept the

group together insofar as continuing the activism that had already produced so many changes. Her leadership was based on her reputation and stature as a tough and unbending activist. Elie comments, "She was incorruptible. She worked harder than anyone else, and she had integrity. In other words, if she told you something, you could believe it."⁴⁶ The crisis of the early 1960s, however, affected Castle and other activists within CORE "at the most basic levels."⁴⁷ It was more than a simple membership or personal dispute; it was a struggle for the integrity and public perception of the group. Oretha did not object to interracial relationships, but she did disagree with some people using the group as a social club. As Elie states, "After all, if we [CORE and civil rights activists in general] were anything, we were integrationists."⁴⁸ Oretha was not willing to compromise the stature of the group or the purity of its perceived purpose for anyone.

New Orleans was the site of a lot of activism following the *Lombard* decision. For example, New Orleans was the point of departure for many activists of the Freedom Rides of 1961, during which the Castle family home on North Tonti Street was the base of operations for many activists as it had been for New Orleans CORE.⁴⁹ CORE in New Orleans challenged many more institutions in the city. With respect to a case in which police brutality against an African-American was alleged, Castle wrote to Police Superintendent Joseph Giarusso, "Such continuous brutal attacks endanger the peace and security of New Orleans as well as the reputation of the Police Department, and of equal importance, the health of the individual."⁵⁰ Black leaders did not abandon direct action in their effort to end segregation.

After Haley became president of the New Orleans chapter of CORE, she led a group that attacked the mainstays of white supremacy all over the city of New Orleans. There were direct action campaigns on Canal Street; activists targeted movie theaters, stores, hotels, restaurants, and employment.⁵¹ In 1963, protesters marched on City Hall targeting continuing segregation in City Hall and New Orleans. That same year, Haley was a signatory to a petition filed with Mayor Victor Schiro's office. The "Petition to the Greater New Orleans Community" was drafted by the Citizens Committee of Greater New Orleans, which included the leaders of all the major civil rights organizations of the city, including Arthur J. Chapital and Ernest Morial from the NAACP, Avery Alexander and Dr. Henry Mitchell of the Consumer's League of Greater New Orleans.⁵² The group was headed by Lolis Elie, an attorney who worked to defend civil rights activists in New Orleans during the 1950s and

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Rogers, 128; Elie to Barreto.

⁵⁰ Castle, Oretha, to Joseph Giarusso, letter dated 14 March 1963. Found in CORE Films Archive, Reel 20, file 44. Courtesy Amistad Research Center, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA.

⁵¹ _____. "New Orleans 1961: Summary of Activities 1961," CORE Films Archive, Reel 20, File 44; Castle, Doris, "CORE on Canal Street," CORE Films, Reel 20, File 44. Courtesy Amistad Research Center, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA.

⁵² _____. "Petition to the Greater New Orleans Community," Victor Hugo Schiro Collection, City Archives, New Orleans Public Library, Carton S63-10, Folder Integration 2.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 130.

⁴¹ Elie to Barreto.

⁴² O. Haley to Rogers.

⁴³ Rogers, 131.

⁴⁴ O. Haley to Rogers.

⁴⁵ Elie to Barreto.

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1960s, and called for official city support for full desegregation in public facilities, education, healthcare, and voter registration.⁵³ The petition also stated, “Finally, we call upon all people to look deep within their hearts to see if they are presently fulfilling God’s commandment ‘to love your neighbor as yourself.’”⁵⁴ This petition was a product of the union of several organizations to achieve the end of official segregation in the city. It also demonstrated the wish held by the black leadership in the city for a conscious change in the mindset of community members, who, they hoped, would accept each other within the framework of social change and acceptance.

Shortly after the Citizens’ Committee petition was delivered to the mayor in 1963, Oretha Castle and other black leaders led a march on City Hall. Oretha told the crowd, “As long as we are held in economic and political slavery, they [the whites] aren’t free either.”⁵⁵ Activists sat in at the cafeteria in City Hall, protesting the cafeteria’s segregationist practices in the face of a compromise reached between black activists and white leaders of the city. Avery Alexander, an early leader in the drive for civil rights in New Orleans, was dragged out of the building and up two flights of stairs by his heels by New Orleans police officers after refusing to leave the cafeteria.⁵⁶ The police action against Alexander was denounced by a federal court judge, who commented, “...I must say, as a judge, as a citizen, and I might add, as a Southerner, I think the way in which this man was handled was a disgrace to the city, the police department, and everyone concerned.”⁵⁷ Tensions again ran high between city leaders and black activists. Activity in New Orleans was not at all diminishing during these years.

Castle and New Orleans’ CORE led campaigns against several other prominent agencies in the city that continued to discriminate against African-Americans. In 1964, CORE members, including Oretha and Doris Castle, filed suit against Schwegmann Brothers Giant Supermarkets, claiming, “Upon information and belief, defendant [Schwegmann’s] established, and at all times has maintained, now maintains and threatens to continue to maintain, a pattern and policy of strict racial segregation and discrimination...”⁵⁸ The lawsuit was filed after several sit-ins and demonstrations at the supermarkets and was dismissed by motion of the plaintiffs in 1967, after Schwegmann’s evidently ended segregation at its stores.⁵⁹ That same year, CORE also introduced a lawsuit against Charity Hospital on behalf

of Oretha Castle’s grandmother, Callie.⁶⁰ The group was successful in desegregating the hospital, thereby opening another important agency in New Orleans for equal treatment to both races. Activists challenged New Orleans at its heart, defying the rules at its core institutions and not backing down.

Oretha Castle made her mark as a dynamic leader in CORE. Goldfinch calls her a firebrand.⁶¹ Elie states, “She was accepted as an optimal leader. She worked harder and had as much guts as anybody in the Movement.”⁶² For many activists, including Matt Suarez and Lolis Elie, she became like an intellectual and activist sister.⁶³ Elie states, “...she was a very talented, dedicated, incorruptible woman.”⁶⁴ In CORE files, the following notes are written concerning Oretha, “Struggle for human dignity and [first] class citizenship is worth all sacrifices. Jail and the loss of my job is a small price to pay.”⁶⁵ Her determination during the sit-ins established her reputation as a fearless leader. To be sure, many other activists possessed this determination, forming a core group of activists that continued to act around the city and open up more restaurants, venues, and public accommodations for African-Americans. Elie comments about activists like Oretha, “...these were young people who feared neither prison nor death...you know, very radical people.”⁶⁶ Haley helped crack the ceiling keeping African-Americans out of public places and denied them the right to live as human beings.⁶⁷

In 1964, Oretha Castle finished her schooling at Southern University in New Orleans. She joined the national staff of CORE, becoming a field secretary for CORE in northern Louisiana.⁶⁸ Toward the end of the 1960s, Haley shifted her attention to other projects that promoted the welfare of the African-American community, including healthcare, education, and housing. For example, in 1968 and 1969, there was widespread debate in the city over a new corridor for the highway system. One proposal put the roadway along Napoleon Avenue, displacing a large predominantly African-American community. Haley protested against this vigorously, and eventually the expressway was built nearer the industrial sector of the city, displacing fewer families.⁶⁹ In October 1978, Haley helped organize a conference aimed at improving parental involvement in the struggling Orleans Parish Public School System.⁷⁰ Haley continued to work for the African-American community until the end of her life.

Like activists in other civil rights groups, CORE activists entrusted their lives to the activists working alongside them. Many were willing to sacrifice their

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Rogers, 92.

⁵⁶ Rogers, 92, 93.

⁵⁷ _____. “U.S. Judge Ends Bias in City Hall Café,” Victor Hugo Schiro Collection, City Archives, New Orleans Public Library, Carton S64-14, Folder “Integration.”

⁵⁸ _____. *Oretha Castle, et. al. v. Schwegmann Brothers Giant Supermarkets, Inc.*, in Guide to the Microfilm Edition of Southern Civil Rights Litigation Records for the 1960s, Clement E. Vose, editor (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University); _____. “CORE Test Team Closes Schwegmann Cafeteria,” CORE Films, Reel 20, File 43. Courtesy Amistad Research Center, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Elie to Barreto; Rogers, 144, 176.

⁶¹ Goldfinch to Barreto.

⁶² Elie to Barreto.

⁶³ Rogers, 136, 138.

⁶⁴ Elie to Barreto.

⁶⁵ CORE Films Archive. Reel 20. File 44. Courtesy Amistad Research Center, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA.

⁶⁶ Elie to Barreto.

⁶⁷ Haley to Rogers.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

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freedom and lives for the struggle that strove to give blacks a semblance of civil rights. At the same time, these young people dealt head-on with the notions of race and ethnicity that had torn America apart for much of its history. Activists—black and white, young and old—were dealing with their own prejudices and preconceived opinions, while trying to change those of America at large. They were supposed to be starting a broad-based liberation movement, only to find that the goals of civil rights did not necessarily entail the same type of action from all black groups. This was a big intellectual and ideological challenge for the young activists that made up CORE chapters around the South.

Faced with changing race relations among activists in New Orleans, Oretha Castle also increasingly became aware of changes within the CORE organization following 1962. Kim Rogers writes, “While Oretha Castle was a strong-willed and dynamic CORE chair in the early 1960s, most chapter members who remained after 1962 were primarily workers, rather than leaders.”⁷¹ Civil rights activists around the South faced a multitude of challenges, not the least of which was the violence displayed by white supremacist groups. The hardest hit activists were usually those working in Mississippi. In 1964, three civil rights workers—Michael Schwerner, James Chaney, and Andrew Goodman—were killed in a case that stunned America and the world and provided the impetus for a large radical and separatist movement. The rifts between black and white activists began to widen, and some blacks looked for a more radical way to gain power and equality. Members of the Black Power movement, the Black Panthers, and more radical wings of organizations like the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) ultimately pushed the struggle for civil rights into a new chapter. These activists relied not so much on a sense of a moral purpose but on the results that radical separatism and militancy could achieve. After the death of Martin Luther King, the rift was complete.

In New Orleans, as in other areas around the country, the unified civil rights movement ran into the same kind of conflict that dealt other civil rights organizations a blow. Many activists that were instrumental in the early period of activity targeting the bastions of white power had left the city. For others, the ideological struggles of the mid- to late-1960s tore apart the commitment that had existed in the early 1960s. The crisis that New Orleans’ CORE experienced in 1961 and 1962 foreshadowed the crisis within African-American groups around the country later in the decade and New Orleans civil rights activists came to share some of the feelings that plagued other activists around the country. In the end, Oretha Castle and other activists felt disillusionment with the results of the civil rights movement. Goldfinch states, “We had the naïve belief, in retrospect, the naïve belief that when blacks came into the political mainstream, got enfranchised and voted, that it would make a difference in the ethical and responsible level, it would be a better government, a better place.” They later concluded, however, according to Goldfinch, “The political system itself is not going to change just because the actors may change.”⁷² African-American activists were disillusioned

⁷¹ Rogers, 125.

⁷² Goldfinch to Barreto.

by the lack of change in America’s attitude toward race and racial divides. Oretha commented, “I do think basically [that] this country is deeply, a deeply racist country.”⁷³ In the same way that activists at the beginning of the 1960s did not want to depend on the legal system to resolve disputes over segregation and discrimination, many activists after 1964 and later in the decade became impatient with continuing violence against activists who were convinced that they were doing the right thing. As agendas, ideologies, and groups grew apart, unified activism for civil rights also diminished. Civil rights activists shifted their activity; many started families, got married, had children and gradually became immersed in other pursuits.

Oretha Castle married Richard Haley in 1967.⁷⁴ The mother of four sons, Mrs. Haley looked for work to help support her family while still remaining active in the New Orleans community throughout the 1970s and 1980s. She shifted her energies in the struggle for basic rights to other areas of the community where African-Americans needed help. No longer were civil rights activists necessarily marching, picketing, or sitting-in. Many turned their attention to the areas of society that offered the least opportunities and most challenges for the African-American community.

For Oretha Haley those areas were education and healthcare. As deputy administrator at Charity Hospital in New Orleans during the 1970s⁷⁵, she helped manage one of the largest healthcare providers for minorities in Louisiana. She made an impact in the highly political realm of state healthcare, demonstrating the same fiery enthusiasm for her work as in New Orleans’ CORE. Lolis Elie states, “...[P]eople just shuddered at the thought of going to the state legislature. When they started sending Oretha, the state legislators would shudder about what she would say.”⁷⁶ Haley also helped found the New Orleans Sickle Cell Anemia Foundation, helping to address some of the gravest health threats for African-Americans.⁷⁷ She helped recruit minorities at Louisiana State University Medical and Dental Schools, opening up the way for young blacks in apprenticeship programs, and inspiring young blacks to enter medical and dental fields.⁷⁸ In education, Haley founded The Learning Workshop, a small day care school in mid-city New Orleans that still serves the community today.⁷⁹ Her son Okyeame states, “I think it all for her transformed into just this... overriding love for children, and that became the centerpiece and the focus of everything that she did...”⁸⁰ Her efforts were varied and certainly numerous; for the remainder of her life, Oretha Haley dedicated herself to these pursuits with the same energy and conviction

⁷³ Haley to Rogers.

⁷⁴ Rogers, 176.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Elie to Barreto.

⁷⁷ ya Salaam, Kalamu, “Oretha Castle Haley: July 22, 1939-October 10, 1987,” *The New Orleans Tribune*, November 1987, p. 29.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Haley to Barreto.

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with which she approached the struggle for civil rights.

Mrs. Haley was also involved in New Orleans' political world. Her influence within the black community galvanized black leaders behind a common cause. Elie states, “You have these black political factions fighting each other, and Oretha helped bring them together.”⁸¹ During the 1970s, she helped lead Dorothy Mae Taylor's campaign for the state legislature⁸², and, in 1984, she helped lead Gail Glapion's Orleans Parish School Board bid.⁸³ She formed the Black Women's Assembly, which, according to Kalamu ya Salaam, “focused on parents directly influencing school board policy.”⁸⁴ There were always projects, meetings, causes, and struggles, even in the face of her increasingly failing health. Haley was concerned with improving the condition of the African-American community, and throughout her career in public life she encouraged African-Americans to become pro-active in their communities and the lives of their children. Ultimately, according to the people who knew her best, Haley worked herself to death.⁸⁵ She died in 1987 at only 48, and she died looking to what needed to be done in the future. Elie, one of Oretha Castle Haley's closest friends and associates, relates that Oretha was always thinking about the “next step” in the movement.⁸⁶

New Orleans has remembered her with affection, naming a school in her honor⁸⁷ and memorializing the commercial section of Dryades Street—the site where the civil rights struggle began in New Orleans—as Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard in 1989.⁸⁸ At Oretha Castle Haley Elementary School in the heart of New Orleans, school principal Roslyn Smith states, “The way she lived her life is what we wish for our students.”⁸⁹ Oretha Haley is also remembered by the people that she helped throughout her lifetime. Salaam writes, “She lives in each of us who strives in whatever way, large or small, to carry on the task of sowing struggle and reaping freedom.”⁹⁰

Many activists of all races worked tirelessly to gain the full protection of civil rights for everyone in America. In this way, Oretha Castle Haley becomes a reflection of those activists she helped to lead and inspire as well as a representative of those with whom she shared a cause. In the struggles for equality that filled her life she was certainly accompanied by many activists who were as tireless as she was. Salaam writes, “Oretha's story is really a story of many people working to keep the general in the battle.”⁹¹ Obviously, however, her role as a leader in the

⁸¹ Elie to Barreto.

⁸² Salaam, 29.

⁸³ Ibid, 30.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 29.

⁸⁵ Elie to Barreto; G. Haley to Barreto.

⁸⁶ Elie to Barreto.

⁸⁷ Stroup, Sheila, “Name Shows School Pride,” *The Times-Picayune*, 29 August 1995, Sec. B, p. 1.

⁸⁸ Donze, Frank, “Haley District Primed for Art, Visitors; City Hopes Work Sparks Revival,” *The Times-Picayune*, 7 November 1997, Sec. A, p. 1.

⁸⁹ Stroup, 1.

⁹⁰ Salaam, 30.

struggle for civil rights in New Orleans makes her an important activist of the 1960s in New Orleans. She led without regard for gender, race, or social class, not caring what others would think of her actions. Lolis Elie states, “...[She] had no doubt. She was someone who just inspired people. That's what she did.”⁹² Rudy Lombard commented of her, “She was fearless.”⁹³ In the end, she was the catalyst for a lot of change in New Orleans, as a galvanizing force within the black community. As such, she is recognized as an indispensable part of the struggle for civil rights in New Orleans.⁹⁴ Salaam writes, “We followed Oretha Haley forward.”⁹⁵

Oretha Haley died looking toward the future. She was continuously looking toward the next project that needed attention. In that respect, in the case of Haley and many other activists, the Civil Rights Movement has never ended. Oretha did not regret the activism of which she formed a part, but disillusionment has still plagued some activists in seeing the failed promise of civil rights and equality. So, then, the story of Oretha Haley and the Civil Rights Movement in New Orleans is also a symbol of the challenges of the post-Movement era. The disillusionment with which many activists saw the period following the civil rights struggle, especially as related to the Vietnam War, increased violence towards civil rights activists, and the turmoil that resulted in the deaths of several high profile leaders, including Martin Luther King, Jr., manifested itself in the fissure of organizations like CORE, SNCC, and the NAACP, into several factions. Since the end of the 1960s, the goal of civil rights has no longer been a clearly defined issue, no longer a matter of right versus wrong. In this new era, there are gray areas, challenges, and, of course, new debates over the future of African-Americans in American society.

Throughout this time of change, Oretha still led a movement to improve the quality of life for African-Americans. She still had doubts about the future of America, and the long-term legacy of the Civil Rights Movement. Toward the end of her life, Oretha Haley led smaller movements, but struggles nonetheless, often for essential issues in African-American life, including education and healthcare. Haley, therefore, came to symbolize the next phase of the American Civil Rights Movement, the grassroots-level campaign led by tireless activists trying to do their small part. As her own health was failing, Haley kept working for what she considered would bring advances to the African-American community. After her death, she still inspired people to do more for their communities. Ultimately, this was the goal of the struggle she helped to lead.

⁹² Elie to Barreto.

⁹³ Snyder, David, “Rights activist mourned,” *The Times-Picayune*, 15 October 1987, Sec. B, p. 1.

⁹⁴ Elie to Barreto.

⁹⁵ Salaam, 29.

**The Historikerstreit :
The Historians' Debate on German Politics, National Identity, and the
Holocaust's Place in History**

by : Joel Mandina

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The history of Germany is both unique and complex, even deserving the special reference of *Sonderweg* or "special path." From the late creation of the German nation-state "from above" to its Cold War division and subsequent reunification, nothing has left as indelible a mark on Germany's eventful history as World War II, the Holocaust, and their aftermaths. In the 1980s, the *Historikerstreit*, translated Historian's Controversy or Historian's Debate, erupted into the German public sphere and involved historians, politicians, writers, and the media. This debate, over the supposed "place" in history of the Holocaust and Nazi crimes, led to a fervent argument which polarized German historians along political ideological lines and revealed that German national identity still has not found the correct place for the tragic events of its past.

The *Historikerstreit* is neither the first nor the last controversy to erupt concerning the National Socialists and their policies. Dan Diner says, "Whatever the impact of the Nazi mass crimes on German consciousness, the controversy on the Holocaust erupts with stark regularity."¹ He lists several of these in the decades following World War II: the appearance of Anne Frank's diary in the 1950s, Rolf Huochhuth's *Deputy* in the 1960s, the television series *Holocaust* in the 1970s, and the "notorious" *Historikerstreit* of the 1980s. It is the virulent storm which accompanied the *Historikerstreit*, a storm which covered in its wake the politics of reunification, the foundation of German national identity and character, and the nature of history and its adequacy in dealing with the Holocaust, which makes it so necessary and interesting to study.

The study of the Holocaust has produced many different schools of thought, the most controversial being that of the revisionists. Revisionism, at its most radical, is the denial of the Holocaust; though the theory is multifaceted. Some revisionists believe that the Holocaust is a conspiracy fabricated by the Jews or the Allies to achieve the Zionist goal of a separate Jewish state. Some believe that the reduction of Jews in Europe is simply the result of emigration or the ravages of war (such as hunger and disease), while others claim Auschwitz was merely a large industrial plant and Jewish Holocaust accounts are fraudulent. Revisionists also believe that the suffering of the Germans far outweighed that of the Jews. As a whole, the revisionist school is frequently criticized as racist and

¹ Dan Diner, "On Guilt Discourse and Other Narratives: Epistemological Observations Regarding the Holocaust," *History and Memory* 9 (1997): 302.

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unscholarly; and, at the time of the *Historikerstreit*, both the conservative historians and the government itself, including the Chancellor, had been accused of being revisionists. Ernst Nolte, the historian chiefly identified with the conservative side said in a 1994 interview, "I am not a revisionist for revisionism's sake. In my opinion, one of the most necessary revisions, perhaps the most important single revision that must be made, is to rectify the practice of interpreting German history by looking only at German history, that is, to seek out only German sources for what happened in Germany."² It is Nolte and the revisionist philosophy that plays such a vital role in the *Historikerstreit* and the controversy of the Holocaust in history.

The extensive media coverage of two events brought the issue of Holocaust relativism to the forefront of German consciousness. These events were a surge in the publication of conservative works, particular those by Nolte and Andreas Hillgruber, and "the aftermath of Bitburg and the anniversaries."³ Though the works of these conservative historians, as well as the writings of their opponents, particularly Jürgen Habermas, form the core of the controversy, the events at Bitburg serve to illuminate the mindset of Germany in the 1980s.

1983 and 1985 were major anniversaries of World War II events. 1983 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the Nazi seizure of power, and 1985 was the fortieth anniversary of the end of the war and the liberation of the death camps. The Helmut Kohl government was in power after the political climate had taken a rightward turn and power was transferred from the Social Democrats to the Christian Democrats in the elections of 1982.⁴ As the 1985 anniversary approached, the proper way to commemorate it became a topic of intense public debate, particularly when it was compounded by the state visit of the of American president Ronald Reagan.

Reagan had made it clear that he did not want to visit Dachau or any other concentration camps during his visit. His words, "I don't think we ought to focus on the past. I want to focus on the future. I want to put that history behind me," heralded a new era in coming to terms with the events of German history.⁵ Three weeks before Reagan's visit, it was revealed that Kolmeshöhe, the military cemetery at Bitburg and the planned site of the commemoration services, contained several

² Ian B. Warren, "Throwing Off Germany's Imposed History: The Third Reich's Place in History: A Conversation with Professor Ernst Nolte," *Journal of Historical Review*, Institute for Historical Review, accessed on 11 Sept. 2003 at <http://www.ihr.org/jhr/v14/v14n1p5_Warren.html>.

³ Charles S. Maier, *The Unmasterable Past: History, Holocaust, and German National Identity* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1988), 19.

⁴ Rod Stackelberg, "Historikerstreit (Historian's Controversy)" in *Europe Since 1945: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Bernard Cook (New York: Garland, 2001), 470.

⁵ Jacob Westergard Madsen, "The Vividness of the Past: A Retrospect on the West German *Historikerstreit* in the mid-1980s," *University of Sussex Journal of Contemporary History*, The University of Sussex, accessed on 11 Sept. 2003 at <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/Units/HUMCENTR/usjch/madsen_1.html>.

graves of soldiers from the infamous Waffen SS. At this revelation, there was massive political pressure, especially from Jewish groups, to change the location of the ceremony; and Kohl was accused of trying to relativize Nazi crimes. He and Reagan kept their plans, with Reagan even referring to the SS soldiers as fellow "victims."⁶ Jürgen Habermas, a key player in the coming controversy, wrote:

The aura of the military cemetery was to awaken national sentiment and historical consciousness. The proximity of the mound of corpses in the concentration camp to the SS graves in the military cemetery—in the morning Bergen-Belsen, in the afternoon Bitburg—implicitly contested the uniqueness of the National Socialist crimes; and the handshake of the old generals in the presence of the American president finally confirmed that we had always been on the right side in the fight against Bolshevism.⁷

The Bitburg affair, as it came to be known, was a disaster that shifted the public focus and set the stage for the *Historikerstreit* of the following year. "What should have been the celebration of V-E Day was instead described as a political failure which blurred dividing lines between victims and victimiser, and unsuccessfully equated reconciliation and revisionism, while questioning the relevance of the Nazi past."⁸

The controversy of the *Historikerstreit* divided West Germany's academic community along political ideologies. The liberal side, headed by Habermas, included Hans and Wolfgang Mommsen, Eberhard Jackel, Jürgen Kocka, Heinrich August Winkler, and Hans-Ulrich Wehler. The conservative side, led by Nolte, Andreas Hillgruber, and Michael Strümer, also included Klaus Hildebrand, Hagen Schulze, and Joachim Fest, editor of the conservative newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ)*.⁹ These historians would use the German media, particularly the *FAZ* and the liberal *Die Zeit*, as the battleground over the true nature of the Nazis.

Habermas began the controversy with an article appearing on July 11, 1986 in *Die Zeit*. Entitled "A Kind of Settlement of Damages: The Apologetic Tendencies in German History Writing," the article and its . . .

. . . criticism [are] directed primarily at three well-known German historians, Michael Strümer, Andreas Hilgruber, and Ernst Nolte. In general, he accuses them of "apologetic tendencies" in their writing about National Socialism. The implications of their revisionist historiography resonated notably with the ideological aims of the broader neoconservative offensive in West German political life.¹⁰

⁶ Madsen.

⁷ Maier, 56-57.

⁸ Madsen.

⁹ Stackelberg, 470.

¹⁰ John Torpey, "Introduction: Habermas and the Historians," *New German Critique* 44 (1988): 6.

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Habermas sees these three historians as supporters of what is currently referred to as the *Tendenzwende*, the trend “in West German intellectual life which tried to embrace history in order to encourage a more positive national identity.”¹¹ He cites their previous works as examples of “apologetic tendencies.”

Nolte, a historian trained in philosophy, had one of his infamous articles published a few days earlier on June 6 in the *FAZ*. The article, entitled “The Past That Will Not Pass: A Speech That Could Be Written but Not Delivered,” said that Nazi crimes, besides being no worse than the Russian genocides committed by Stalin and the Bolsheviks, may have actually been a preemptive strike against the Communist menace.

Nonetheless, the following question must seem permissible, even unavoidable: Did the National Socialists or Hitler perhaps commit an “Asiatic” deed merely because they and their ilk considered themselves to be potential victims of an “Asiatic” deed? Was the Gulag Archipelago not primary to Auschwitz? Was the Bolshevik murder of an entire class not the logical and factual prius of the ‘racial murder’ of the National Socialism? . . . Did Auschwitz in its root causes not originate in a past that would not pass?¹²

In a country where the slightest tinge of anti-Semitism can be the death knell of a politician and Internet sites are still censored for racial content, Nolte’s theories were, to say the least, thought provoking. Habermas criticized his approach:

He hits two flies with one swat: The Nazi crimes lose their singularity in that they are at least made comprehensible as an answer to the (still extant) Bolshevik threats of annihilation. The magnitude of Auschwitz shrinks to the format of technical innovation and is explained on the basis of the “Asiatic” threat from an enemy that still stands at the door.¹³

Habermas also mentions the article’s title, which he calls “hypocritical”; for Nolte was supposed to present the article at that year’s Römerberg Talks; but was, according to Habermas, uninvited because of the content of the paper.

Another of Nolte’s works, “Between Historical Legend and Revisionism? The Third Reich in the Perspective of 1980,” was based on a lecture given by Nolte at the *Carl-Freidrich-Seimens-Stiftung* in Munich and later appeared in the *FAZ* on July 24, 1980 and was also criticized by Habermas. This article questions the

¹¹ Madsen.

¹² Rudolph Augstein, et al. “*Historikerstreit*”: *Die Dokumentation der Kontroverse um die Einzigartigkeit der nationalsozialistischen Judenvernichtung*. Munich: Piper Verlag, 1987. (English translation by James Knowlton and Truett Cates. *Forever in the Shadow of Hitler? Original Documents of the Historikerstreit, the Controversy Concerning the Singularity of the Holocaust*. Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1993, 22.

¹³ Rudolph, 41.

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difference between such conquerors as Napoleon and Hitler and speculates that the reason why the “negative myth” of Nazi Germany persists into present-day is because history is written by the victors. Nolte says, “Thus, in America, in the aftermath of the Civil War the prevailing view was, at first, only that of the righteous cause of the victor, but later historians tried to better understand the South, to find some good side of the Southern cause, to explore its politics and historical context.”¹⁴ Habermas is critical of Nolte’s theory, but even more so of his approach. Habermas says, “Nolte invites us to take part in a tasteful thought experiment. He sketches for us the image of Israel that would be held by a victorious PLO after the destruction of Israel: ‘For decades, perhaps even a century, no one would venture . . . to attribute the rise of Zionism to its spirit of resistance to European anti-Semitism.’”¹⁵ This comparison of Nazi Germany to present-day Israel and the accompanying image of a crushed Israel could be seen in a multitude of ways, but the analogy eventually prompted Jewish historian Saul Friedländer to walk out of Nolte’s dinner party.

At the end of his article, Nolte gives three postulates about the future writing of Third Reich history. First, he says, “the Third Reich should be removed from the historical isolation in which it remains even when it is treated within the framework of an epoch of fascism.” Second, “the instrumentalization to which the Third Reich owes a good part of its continuing fascination should be prevented.” Finally, “the demonization of the Third Reich is unacceptable.”¹⁶

Other of Nolte’s unconventional comments, such as “The talk of ‘the guilt of the Germans,’ all too blithely overlooks the similarity to the talk about ‘the guilt of the Jews,’” were forcing readers to reevaluate their knowledge of Germany’s role in history and the uniqueness of Auschwitz.¹⁷ At the same time, Nolte’s contemporaries were also asking similar questions.

Hillgruber raised the ire of Habermas with his book *Two Kinds of Collapse: The Destruction of the German Reich and the End of European Jewry*. According to Habermas’ critique in “Apologetic Tendencies,” Hillgruber, in the first part of his book, attempts to ardently relay the tale of the destruction of the Third Reich, while, in the second half, a total of twenty-two pages is unenthusiastically devoted to the “end of the European Jewry.” “Hilgruber chooses the noun *Judentum* (Jewry) rather than the word *Juden* (Jews) to set the collective concept in parallel with that of the Reich.”¹⁸

In the first part of the book, Hilgruber passionately tells the tale of the last year of war on the eastern front. He speaks of the “problem of identification,” meaning with whom the readers should identify, and encourages Germans to

¹⁴ Warren.

¹⁵ Jürgen Habermas, “A Kind of Settlement of Damages: The Apologetic Tendencies in German History Writing” in Rudolph, 38-9.

¹⁶ Ernst Nolte, “Between Historical Legend and Revisionism? The Third Reich in the Perspective of 1980” in Rudolph, 14-5.

¹⁷ Rudolph, 19.

¹⁸ Maier, 23.

empathize with, above all, the German soldiers fighting the Russians on the eastern front.

He must identify with the concrete fate of the German population in the East and with the desperate and sacrificial efforts of the German army in the eastern theater and of the German navy in the Baltic. The military forces in the East were trying to protect the German population in the East from the orgies of revenge by the Red Army, mass rape, the random murders, and the forced deportation, and . . . to hold open the escape route to the West.¹⁹

Habermas also criticizes Hilgrubber for insinuating that the mission of the group of Germans attempting to assassinate Hitler was somehow less ethical than the mission of the German soldiers in the East. Habermas says, "Hilgrubber wants to present what happened in eastern Germany from the view of the brave soldiers, the desperate civilian population, also the 'tried and true higher-ups' of the Nazi party."²⁰

Habermas continues that in the second half, *End of the European Jewry*, Hilgrubber deviates from the passionate rhetoric he used when speaking of the Third Reich's destruction. "Destruction" of the Reich implies an aggressive opponent, while "end" of the Jewry implies a natural progression.²¹ Habermas says, "In the first section, we read the unrevised, unpurified clichés of jargon retained since childhood; in the second section, we experience the frozen language of bureaucracy." He cites many examples; one of them being references to the gas chambers as "'more effective means' of liquidation."²² Hilgrubber also attempts to isolate Hitler, even among members of his inner circle such as Himmler and Göring, as the only proponent for eradication of the Jews.²³

The final target is Strümer, which "Habermas criticized as a conservative, nationalistic, and Cold War-orientated historiographic."²⁴ He was an adviser and speechwriter for Chancellor Kohl and, "For Strümer, the crucial issue is that the Federal Republic has developed into 'the centerpiece of the European defensive arc in the Atlantic system in the postwar era.'²⁵

Strümer is upfront from the beginning about his use of history. He begins with the fact that, of all industrialized nations, Germans lack the most intergenerational communication, and have the people with the lowest self-confidence and most shifting values. In his "History in a Land without History" in the April 25, 1986 issue of *FAZ*, Strümer speaks about the political uses of history.

The other reminds us that if we find no substance in the present we will turn our gaze to the past in order to find direction and

assurance . . . A loss of orientation and a search for identity are closely related. But anyone who believes that this trend will have no effect on politics and the future is ignoring the fact that in a land without history, the future is controlled by those who determine the content of memory, who coin concepts and interpret the past.²⁶

Strümer criticizes both sides of the political spectrum. He accuses the Right of underestimation and the Left of "the progressive strangulation of history," but it is Strümer's attempt to manipulate history for the sake of a politically unified Germany that make him the most politicized of the conservative historians.²⁷

Strümer is perhaps the most dangerous, since: "According to Habermas, Strümer's quest for historical identity (or orientation) provided the unifying thread for the revisionist assessments of the Third Reich offered by Nolte and Hilgrubber. History for Strümer, Habermas, wrote, amounted to a sort of spiritual insurance plan for the damages entailed by modernization."²⁸

No matter where one lies on the political spectrum, the views of the conservative historians are fascinating to study, though there are definitely some elements of Habermas' "apologetic tendencies." "Germany's misfortune is hence always someone else's fault: for Hillgruber it is the Western Allies, for Nolte the 'Bolsheviks,' for Michael Strümer the 'logic of power geography.'²⁹

Habermas' article criticizing "the notorious 'Gang of Four' (Nolte, Hillgruber, Hildebrand, Strümer),"³⁰ served as the catalyst of the *Historikerstreit*. The spark had ignited, and the controversy sprung forth in the German media with responses from Habermas' critics, supporters, and his targets themselves. "Had Jürgen Harbermas not seized upon the Hillgruber book and then upon Ernst Nolte's essay, Germany's 'polarized historical conscious' might not have exploded into warfare on the cultural pages."³¹ As the situation snowballed, more and more historians joined the fray, which eventually included American, British, and Israeli scholars. The number of academics involved in the controversy, through opinions, articles, editorials, and interviews, is far too vast to cover, for they literally fill a book; but the essence of the *Historikerstreit* can be examined by following the motives of the key players.

On August 1, *Die Zeit* published a letter to the editor from Nolte. In his first paragraph, he states, "A few sentences are not enough to say anything of

¹⁹ Rudolph, 35.

²⁰ Rudolph, 36.

²¹ Rudolph, 37.

²² Rudolph, 37.

²³ Rudolph, 38.

²⁴ Maier, 19.

²⁵ Tropey, 7.

²⁶ Rudolph, 16.

²⁷ Rudolph, 17.

²⁸ Michael E. Dobe, Sr. "The *Historikerstreit* and the Rewriting of German History," accessed 2 Sept. 2003 at <<http://members.cox.net/mdobe/education/masters/docs/historikerstreit/index1.html>>, 6.

²⁹Omer Bartov, "Time Present and Time Past: The *Historikerstreit* and German Reunification," *New German Critique* 44 (1988): 184.

³⁰ Markovits, Andrei S. "Introduction to the Broszat- Friedländer Exchange," *New German Critique* 44 (1988): 81.

³¹ Maier, 34.

substance about taste and tastelessness, the permissibility of certain comparisons, legitimate criticism, and malignant imputations.”³² In this letter, Nolte makes several accusations: the first, that Habermas is in bad taste for violating the “last veil” of privacy about a “certain interview.”³³ Nolte is referring to the incident concerning the Israeli historian Friedländer; and says that, at the party, there was a “second incident” that disturbed him and caused him to leave. The second accusation concerned the Römerberg Talks and Nolte’s withdrawn invitation. Nolte writes, “I am all the more convinced that my old assumption that the same man who in theory is a protagonist of ‘dominance-free discussion’ in practice skillfully and energetically employs the formal and informal positions of power that he holds on committees and in publishing houses to exercise the function of censor.”³⁴

Scathing opinions issued forth from historians across West Germany criticizing Nolte, Strümer, Hilgrubber, and Habermas while others emerged in support. Among the main historians, insults and attacks raged on, turning, as we saw in Nolte’s last essay, from critical commentary and defense of personal views to personal insults. On July 31, the *FAZ* published Hildebrand’s “The Age of Tyrants: History and Politics: The Administrators of the Enlightenment, the Risk of Scholarship, and the Preservation of a Worldview. A Reply to Jürgen Habermas.” In it, Hildebrand refers to Habermas’ writing as “a dark brew of politics and scholarship, of *weltanschauung* and historical perspectives, of prejudices and facts,” accuses him of “ridiculous miscalculations,” and defends Hilgrubber’s book.³⁵ On August 11, Habermas, in a letter to *FAZ* says, “The bad situation is not made any better by the fact that Hildebrand feels hurt and reacts diffusely.”³⁶ On August 16, Strümer replies to Habermas in *FAZ* with, “Habermas can either be taken seriously or he can continue to combine sloppy research with patched together quotes in an attempt to place historians on his blacklist.”³⁷ The historians’ reactions continue on and on getting more and more aggressive. The public reaction was even more virulent and not confined to the pages of newspapers and magazines; for, in 1988, Nolte’s car was firebombed by a leftist group.³⁸

By this time, historians across Germany had polarized into liberal and conservative camps, attacking the key players and one another. Letters continued to flood *Die Zeit* and *FAZ*, with historians quoting and misquoting till an almost impenetrable weave of scholarly arguments was created. As Hillgruber says in his “My Concluding Remarks on the So-Called *Historikerstreit*, May 12, 1982,” “The *Historikerstreit*, however, with the exception of a very few objective contributions and balanced considerations by colleagues in the field, degenerated into a boundless public palaver.”³⁹

The *Historikerstreit* of the 1980s was more than just a scholarly debate gone awry. It revealed the deep divisions in the German political establishment, scholarly world, and the public as a whole. Arousing many philosophical questions about the nature of the Holocaust, the Historian’s Debate revealed the inner nature of politics and the typically undiscussed nature of German guilt.

“In the case of the *Historikerstreit*, a striking process can be discerned according to which the debate, steered below the surface by the *Schuldfrage* [sense of guilt], rationalized itself according to the political distinction between *left* and *right*.”⁴⁰ Hans-Georg Betz refers to Nolte and his compatriots as the “New Right” or “neonationalists,” while Mary Nolan says, “The right’s discourse is filled with pleas to normalize the study of Nazism, to empathize with the little man, and to recognize that many aspects of the Third Reich, including its most horrendous acts, were not unique.”⁴¹

One of the few facts of the *Historikerstreit* that is almost universally accepted by both the left and right is that it was an uncommon and nonobjective mix of politics and history. 1980s Germany was a time of vast political change. Germany’s role as the Cold War “battleground” was coming to an end with the process of reunification, and it was Germany’s time to find both its place in the world and its place as a nation. “Thus the ‘German Question’ has once more become everyone’s problem, for when a major power determines its policies (or at least claims to do so) by reference to its past, then this power’s past (or its understanding of that past) assumes a central role in world affairs.”⁴²

These roles—provider of aid, European power, member of the transatlantic alliance, and a generally successful and peaceful nation—are all colored by the complicated past of fascist Germany. Mommsen says that the sort of historical relativism propagated by the right will result in history being used to “foster an aggressive national consciousness”⁴³ in an attempt to unify a people under the banner of a shared sordid past. Hans-Georg Betz comments on the state of post-war Germans approaching reunification and their lack of a cohesive identity. “The majority of West Germans are finally confronting the reality of their situation, a reality they have long chosen to ignore or forget: ‘Not a nation, not a culture, hardly a society but an entity.’”⁴⁴ Diner discusses the transformation from entity to nation that occurs with reunification—the uniting of left and right and east and west under a single German banner.

What really happened was the transformation of the *Bundesrepublik* into *Deutschland*—the displacement of the constitutive interpretive model of the body politic from *society*

³² Rudolph, 56.

³³ Rudolph 56.

³⁴ Rudolph, 56-57.

³⁵ Rudolph, 50.

³⁶ Rudolph, 58.

³⁷ Rudolph, 61.

³⁸ Warren.

³⁹ Rudolph, 269.

⁴⁰ Diner, 305-306.

⁴¹ Mary Nolan, “The *Historikerstreit* and Social History,” *New German Critique* 44 (1988): 52.

⁴² Bartov, 174

⁴³ Bartov, 181.

⁴⁴ Hans-Georg Betz, “*Deutschlandpolitik* on the Margins: On the Evolution of Contemporary New Right Nationalism in the Federal Republic,” *New German Critique* 44 (1988): 127.

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to *nation*. It is only this latter event that locates the *Historikerstreit* in its rightful historical context and reveals the controversy's underlying concern—in anticipation of reunification—with the problem of German identity.⁴⁵

The problem with this identity is the place of guilt within its context. “A central factor in this process seems to be what Karl Jaspers called the ‘question of guilt’ (*Die Schuldfrage*) or, more precisely, the effect of a constant sense of guilt.”⁴⁶ This *Schuldfrage* is a key factor in understanding the modern-day German, even those that were not alive during the events of World War II. Though they have perpetrated no crimes, younger Germans still must come to terms with their history. Diner invokes the fundamental belief of individual freedom in order to debunk the notion of collective guilt.

The thesis of a cross-generational, predetermined collective German guilt cannot be rationally grounded . . . It has been argued that to acknowledge such a collective phenomenon would mean abandoning the principle of the autonomy of the individual as the bearer of freedom, responsibility and morality, and thus evoking obscure forces of collective identity.⁴⁷

Nolte says that the younger generation of historians has a totally new perspective because, besides not experiencing Hitler's Germany, their views were formed by the views of other nations, particularly “the victors.” “The outlook of this younger generation was essentially formed by the connection with the United States. They all had been in the United States. It was, so to speak, the appropriation of the American interpretation by the younger generations of Germans.”⁴⁸

According to Diner, for German memory as a whole, “the Holocaust might well be defined as an identity-forming foundational event.”⁴⁹ He provides two reasons for this collective guilt: the disproportionate ratio of perpetrators to victims (also factoring in the immense level of suffering of the victims) and a sort of reflective guilt.

Because the victims were slain solely because of their origin, that is, solely because of their belonging to a *collective* and not because of any individual transgression, the amount of guilt resulting from the crime rebounds onto the *entire* collective from which the crime originated. Because the crime was directed at another collective, it invites intuitively a presumption of *collective* guilt.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Diner, 306.

⁴⁶ Diner, 302.

⁴⁷ Diner, 304.

⁴⁸ Warren.

⁴⁹ Diner, 301.

⁵⁰ Diner, 304.

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This “collective guilt” has created a unique symbiosis between the nations of Israel and Germany, and Omer Bartov's article on German reunification illustrates the ever-shifting national relationship between left and right and victim and victimizer concerning these two nations.

Israel's triumph in the Six Day War, however, brought a radical shift in positions: the right embraced Israel which had now liberated it from any remaining sense of guilt; while the radical and new left, perceiving the Jews now as persecutors rather than victims, adopted what Markovits calls an ‘anti-phil-Semitism’ bordering on anti-Semitism, and openly questioned Israel's right to exist.⁵¹

Though European Jewish history begins in Ancient Rome and predates most modern European nations, this questioning of Israel's validity once again smacks of Europe's tradition of anti-Semitism. This prejudice had flourished in Europe since the Jews arrived after the Diaspora that scattered them from the Holy Land. Though religious differences were originally the cause of anti-Semitism, the status of the Jews would alternate between persecution and apathy in different states in different times. At one point, they were exiled from France, Spain, and other countries; but, with events such as the French Revolution, the Jews gained greater acceptance. As theories of racial superiority spread throughout the West, Germany in particular accepted the view of the Jews as an inferior race. By the nineteenth century, Jewish persecution arose more out of hard economic times than from religious differences; but, with the terrible, post-World War I economic situation in Germany and bunk racial theories considered accepted science, the stage was set for Hitler's rise.

Almost everyone in the West is familiar with the mass destruction of World War II, Hitler's attempted eradication of the Jews, and the atrocious methods he used; but, simply for that reason, one must ask if it is indeed possible to *ever* be able to look at the Holocaust objectively. Critics of the conservatives frequently argue that they are far too close to the incidents of World War II to write objectively. All major contributors to the *Historikerstreit* belong to the ‘generation of Hitler Youth,’ and therefore cannot be seen as divorced from the period.⁵² Though the true question is, who in the West, particularly America and the European nations and the Judeo-Christian world, can truly divorce themselves from what has been labeled as one of the greatest tragedies in the history of the world.

Many admit the Holocaust is not unique in the attempted eradication of a people. Nolte frequently brings up Stalinist and Bolshevik Russia, and other scholars are quick to mention the American Indians, the Armenian tragedy during World War I, and Japanese atrocities inflicted upon the Koreans and the Chinese during World War II. “For Nolte, the idea implies that National Socialism can be treated dispassionately, nonobsessively, along with other nations' episodes of

⁵¹ Bartov, 186.

⁵² Bartov, 178.

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terror. Auschwitz need preoccupy the Germans no more than Hiroshima or antebellum slavery, say, haunts Americans."⁵³ The question remains: what keeps the Holocaust so imbedded in the Western mind? The calculated and mechanistic methods of the Germans, the war's almost movie-like attributes (gruesome torture, scientific experiments, the madman-like zeal of Hitler's quest), the passivity of the German citizens, and the documentation of the war through mass media all contribute to the mythical proportions of the Holocaust. One of the most consistent arguments for the pervasiveness of the Holocaust in the Western mind is that the programs were created and initiated by the legitimate government at the time.

Numbers of victims will not establish the uniqueness of the Holocaust—quite the contrary . . . When I argue for the uniqueness of the Holocaust I intend only to claim that the Holocaust is phenomenologically unique by virtue of the fact that never before has a state set out, as matter of intentionality principle and actualized policy, to annihilate every man, woman, and child belonging to a specific people. A close study of the relevant historical data will show that only in the case of Jewry under the Third Reich was such an all-inclusive, noncompromising, unmitigated murder intended.⁵⁴

The sensitive nature of a topic such as the Holocaust typically leads students of the *Historikerstreit* to be critical of the conservative historians, though their alleged manipulation of history for political purposes was to serve as catharsis for their country. "For Nolte, the bracketing of Auschwitz and the gulag means freeing historical consciousness from 'the tyranny of collective thought . . . It means lifting the burden of 'absolute evil' from the German past and reconstructing a usable identity."⁵⁵ As the twenty-first century reader is aware, Germany has found that identity. A strong, successful, and peaceful nation, Germany is one of the world's richest and most powerful countries. It is a leader in world affairs with troops in a variety of peacekeeping missions and is, with France, the lead voice in European integration. Germany has also exhibited its independence from the United States in the 2003 war with Iraq, but the haunting question of Germany's past is still present. "Nazi" is a highly politicized word, and German laws continue to strictly monitor racist activities; though, from time to time, the activities of "neo-Nazi" groups are highly publicized by the media. This unfortunate reminder of the past illustrates the "sore spot" of German identity.

On a whole, the *Historikerstreit* was a debate on the nature of the use of history. The fact that the controversy surrounded the Holocaust, a sensitive and relatively recent event the implications of which are still being felt today, only

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served to make it more ardent. Overall, the debate was warped by political ideologies and took place in a sensationalistic media; which resulted in the historical facts being subjugated by the disciplines of politics and communications. The *Historikerstreit*, nearly instantly after its onset, left the purely academic realm and became a cultural war motivated by politics.

⁵³ Diner, 18.

⁵⁴ Steven W. Katz. "The Uniqueness of the Holocaust: The Historical Dimension" in *Is the Holocaust Unique? Perspectives on Comparative Genocide*, Alan S. Rosenbaum, ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), 19-20.

⁵⁵ Maier, 32.

**Questioning the Sincere Politician:
Joseph A. Craig and the Segregation of New Orleans Public Schools during
Reconstruction**

by: Laurin Jacobsen

When black Republican power-broker P.B.S. Pinchback requested three African Americans to serve on the New Orleans Public School Board in 1876, he hoped that they would continue to voice the concerns of black citizens who were on the cusp of losing their political and civil rights. When Governor Francis T. Nicholls, a white Southern Democrat, appointed a fourth African American to the Board, he likely did not share the same agenda as Pinchback. Nicholl's appointee was Joseph A. Craig, an African American and a Democrat, and the only non-white member of the School Board to vote in favor of school segregation in 1877.

Ascertaining why Craig voted in favor of segregation is a difficult task. What led him to reject the integrationist sentiments held by New Orleans Afro-Creole leadership? What were his political and moral values? His life as a politician and an African American "rights activist" was filled with contradictions. His speeches, comments, and actions before, during, and after his tenure on the School Board reveal an enigmatic personality which lead one to question whether Craig's actions were sincere endeavors, or political maneuvers to get ahead.

Many historians have recounted the story of New Orleans public schools during Reconstruction, and all have told a similar tale. They begin by discussing the influence of Creoles in New Orleans and describing their unique position in New Orleans society. Then they tell of Creole assertiveness that enabled the passage of the Louisiana Constitution of 1868, which outlawed segregated public schooling. Next, they tell of the struggle between *de jure* integration and *de facto* integration, the four years of peaceful integration, the mounting tensions, and then finally the abrupt end of integration following a controversial vote in the New Orleans School Board on July 3, 1877.¹ The intricacies of this decision within the Board are often left out of this narrative, especially those concerning the sentiments of the Board's black members. African Americans held a limited yet venerable voice on the New Orleans School Board in 1877, the year the schools were resegregated, yet no one has analyzed the tension which existed between these black members.

¹ See: Baker, Liva *The Second Battle of New Orleans*, (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1996); DeVore, Donald and Logsdon, Joseph, *Crescent City Schools* (New Orleans, The Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1991); Fischer, Roger, A., *The Segregation Struggle in Louisiana, 1862-77* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1974.); and Harlan, Louis, R., "Desegregation in New Orleans Public Schools During Reconstruction", *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 67, No. 3 (April 1962).

Official Reconstruction ended in the South in 1877. Federal troops abandoned Southern states and white Democrats began to take the offices they held before the Civil War. In response to this, African Americans and white Republicans all over the South began massive campaigns to hold onto political power and protect black civil rights. The campaign in New Orleans was considered one of the most forceful in the South due to the city's large population of educated and active people of color who fought vigorously to prevent the segregation of New Orleans public schools. While the large majority of blacks in New Orleans opposed the decision to segregate the public schools, historical record reveals that there was at least one prominent black-segregationist in the 1870s.

Joseph A. Craig, one of four black members of the School Board in 1877, was the only African American to vote in favor of segregation. This vote undoubtedly caused tension between Craig and his black colleagues, as it gave conservative whites a black ally on the Board who backed their segregation plan. Given the political and social climate of 1877, the presence of a black segregationist in New Orleans is difficult to comprehend. In a city with a thorough mix of white Democrats and black integrationists, a single black segregationist would hardly make a dent on the political scene. Although Craig was a lone voice, his vote held symbolic importance as the black community tried to present a unified front, calling into question what motivation any African American, namely Craig, would have to advocate segregation in New Orleans.

The end of integration in 1877 was actually a "re-segregation" since New Orleans public schools were segregated for a time immediately following the end of the Civil War. Union General B.F. Butler, the commanding general of New Orleans, abolished the old four district school system and on September 5, 1862 established a new, more centralized system which maintained schools for white children only. In 1864, Nathaniel Banks became the new commanding general of New Orleans. In response to abolitionist attacks accusing him of failing to educate the freed blacks of Louisiana, he appointed two abolitionists, Thomas Conway and B. Rush Plumly, head of a separate Board of Education for African Americans known as the Freedmen's Program. Due to poor funding, low attendance, and dilapidated school houses, this early attempt at separate schooling for blacks left the African Americans of Louisiana and especially the blacks and Creoles of New Orleans with much to desire.²

The hopes of both black and white integrationists were finally addressed at the Louisiana Constitutional Convention of 1867, by a delegation that was half black and half white. The key provision adopted at this convention was article 135 of the Louisiana Constitution of 1868, which stated: "All children between the ages of six and twenty-one shall be admitted to the public schools... without distinction of race, color, or previous condition."³ For two years, however, after the adoption of the 1868 Constitution pro-segregationists utilized every legal loophole to keep black children out of white schools. Although the city did open

a number of black schools, proclaiming them "separate but equal," true equality was subverted by the efforts of segregationists of the city. The most influential of these was Robert M. Lusher who instituted his infamous Peabody Fund supporting only white private and parochial schools.⁴ Finally, by 1870 the last loophole was exhausted and a Louisiana judge made segregated schools in any form illegal.⁵

For four years, from 1870 to 1874, the "mixed" schools proved to be very successful. Integrationists such as state superintendent of schools, Thomas Conway, lauded the peaceful intermingling of white and black children in schools, which occurred with little violence and few disciplinary problems. Even some white Democrats were pleasantly surprised at the success of integration. The *Picayune* (a white Democratic publication) sent writer George W. Cable to investigate integrated schools in the hope that he would find significant flaws. His report, instead, shocked readers by praising integrated schooling. "I saw," Cable wrote, "to my great and rapid edification, white ladies teaching Negro boys; children and youth of both races standing in the same classes and giving each other peaceable, friendly, effective competition."⁶ Black newspaper editors like P.B.S. Pinchback also applauded integration and felt it would be a permanent part of the school system. This period saw an impressive number of black and white children enter into mixed schools. It is believed that between five hundred and one thousand African American children, along with nearly one thousand white children, attended racially mixed schools at the height of integration.⁷

It was not until 1874 that tensions began to mount and violence erupted in the schools. The economic depression of 1873 caused a severe lack of funding for the public schools of New Orleans. White Democratic newspapers such as the *Bulletin* began to propagate violence in the schools encouraging white students to physically and forcibly remove black pupils from what they considered "white schools." While individual white boys brought this propaganda into reality, other factors outside of the schools instigated racial tension as well. In September 1874, The Crescent City White League attempted a *Coup d'etat* against the Republican government of Louisiana and violence ensued with the "Battle of Liberty Place." Another factor adding to the unrest was the Republican loss of the United States House of Representatives in 1874, which gave rise to the hope of white Democratic Redemption in the south. Within this midst, many white leaders began to call for segregation of the schools.

In 1877 New Orleans's integrated schools faced their greatest challenge when Rutherford B. Hayes acquired the presidency and removed all federal Union troops from the Southern states. Without Federal Troops, Republicans in Louisiana and other southern states lost the military power needed to protect their political

⁴ Harlan p. 665.

⁵ Judge Henry C. Dibble gave legal sanction to Thomas Conway's redistribution of all state funds for public schools from the Democratic board to his newly constructed board, resulting in the Democratic board's decision to disband in protest (Fischer, pp. 113-114)

⁶ Cable, George W. "My Politics," republished in *The Negro Question*, edited by Arlin Turner (New York, 1958) p. 8

²DeVore, Logsdon, *Crescent City Schools*, "Revolution and Integration", pp. 40-81

³The New Orleans *Daily Democrat*, July 4, 1877, p. 1 c. 2

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offices. Old white southern Democrats who held political office before the Civil War began running for office again, and eventually a Democrat held nearly every office in Louisiana. Francis T. Nicholls, a white Democrat, won the governorship in 1877; Robert M. Lusher, a staunch segregationist, was appointed state superintendent of schools while another self-claimed segregationist from before the war, William O. Rogers, was appointed superintendent of the New Orleans public schools. Although Redemption was complete in Louisiana by mid-1877, black political heavy weights like P.B.S. Pinchback still held some political clout. Governor Nicholls, who claimed to hold concern for black political issues, now negotiated with Pinchback regarding the presence of African Americans in government offices. Whether Nicholls did this to court votes, to appease black leaders, or to fulfill some inner desire to spread equality is unclear; however, he did appoint some of Pinchback's African American allies to office. As a result of these negotiations, Pinchback named three African Americans to the New Orleans School Board: Louis A. Martinet, George H. Fayerweather, and Pascal M. Tourne. But Governor Nicholls also took it upon himself to appoint a fourth African American to the Board who had not been approved by Pinchback. Joseph A. Craig was a local barber and ex-Sergeant at Arms of the Louisiana House of Representatives who had campaigned for Nicholls in 1876.⁸ The different means by which these four African American men were appointed to the School Board would shape the divisive debates to come over the future of integration of the New Orleans public schools.

The New Orleans public School Board of 1876 and 1877 came into existence with the return of southern Democrats to political office. This Board of twenty members included sixteen whites and four blacks, and meetings proceeded in a smooth and cordial manner. No member was ever attacked by another on the basis of race or political association. On the surface, this Board could have convinced anyone that the time had come when southern whites and blacks could work peacefully together for the betterment of their community.

Unfortunately, this politeness and fellowship was only a façade. Race prejudice affected the black members of the Board in subtle but important ways. Only whites, for instance, were made chairs of committees, and none of the black members were on the same committee together which made their voice disunited and weak. In addition, two of the more important committees, Special Branches and Finance, contained only whites. These racist practices, however, went largely unnoticed. It was not until Board member Archibald Mitchell gave his infamous report of the Special Committee that racism and the threat of black civil rights came to the forefront.⁹

On June 6, 1877 Mitchell requested the formation of a special committee, which would later play the title role in school segregation. The purpose of this

⁸ Meyer Jr., Robert, *Names Over New Orleans Public Schools*. (New Orleans: Namesake Press, 1975) p. 48-49.

⁹ Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) minutes, 1876-77.

committee, according to Mitchell, was to address "the consequence of the financial and other difficulties which threaten to embarrass the action of this Board."¹⁰ The president of the School Board at the time was former Confederate Senator Thomas J. Semmes, who was now a law professor at Tulane University.¹¹ Semmes resolved to establish the three-man committee including Mitchell (as chair), Joseph Collins, and R. H. Bartley. This committee reported its findings two weeks later at the Board meeting held on June 22, 1877. In their report the committee members listed numerous problems within the school system, but named only one remedy — segregation.¹²

Mitchell presented a speech that claimed integration had undermined the quality of the public schools of New Orleans. He began his speech by saying, "Personal observation and universal testimony concur to establish the fact that public education has greatly deteriorated since colored and white children were admitted indiscriminately into the same schools." He then claimed that the "evils which have arisen" from integration are three-fold: the "spirit of the white boys" exclude the black children thereby excluding them from the benefits of education; many children are excluded from the benefits of education because their parents refuse to send them to schools with the other race; finally, maintaining discipline proved impossible. Mitchell also argued that the majority of blacks in New Orleans would prefer segregation. Public schools in other cities such as New York, Philadelphia, and Cincinnati, he noted, have succeeded on a segregated basis, and separate schooling did not mean lesser schooling for the "Negro." After this report the members of the Board agreed to adjourn and vote on the measure at the next meeting.¹³

The vote on Mitchell's resolution was finally taken on July 3, 1877, eleven days after the report of the Special Committee was read. Before the vote, Mitchell reminded the members of their purpose in giving "the best education possible to the whole population, without regard to race, color, or previous condition." Yet he went on to say, it "is assumed that this end can be best attained by educating the different races in separate schools."¹⁴ Fayerweather then called for the yeas and nays on Mitchell's original resolution calling for separate schools.¹⁵ Among the Yeas were all of the white members present, and Joseph Craig. According to the Board minutes, after the vote was taken the discussion moved immediately into whether the city's integrated high schools should be abolished. It seemed the Board resolved to segregate the schools and no one, including the three black members who voted against the resolution, ever mentioned it again. The idea that such an

¹⁰ Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) minutes, June 6, 1877.

¹¹ Meyer, p. 184

¹² OPSB minutes, June 22, 1877; DeVore and Logsdon, p. 85-87; Fischer, p. 138; Baker, p. 24-25.

¹³ OPSB minutes, June 22, 1877; *New Orleans Daily Democrat*, July 4, 1877.

¹⁴ OPSB minutes, July 3, 1877.

¹⁵ Yeas: Bartley, Capdeville, Coleman, Craig, Collins, Ferguson, Gutheim, Handy, Hessinger, Mitchell, Beaman, Swarbrick, O'Brien, and Lanoux; Nays: Martinet, Fayerweather, and Tourne (OPSB minutes, July 3, 1877).

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important and far-reaching decision could be made without amendment or debate is peculiar. It is even more curious that none of the three people who opposed the decision would attempt to challenge it.

It appears the School Board minutes presented an edited version of events. John J. O'Brien, Secretary of the Board and among those in favor of segregation, either mistakenly or purposefully left out two very important speeches made during the meeting in response to Mitchell's resolution. Both Louis Martinet and George Fayerweather gave extensive speeches to the members stating their position in favor of integration and why segregation was not the answer to the alleged problems espoused by Mitchell and the Special Committee. Though these speeches were left out of the recorded minutes, they were, ironically, reported in the pro-segregationist publication, *The New Orleans Daily Democrat*.

Martinet's response to Mitchell's suggestion to re-segregate the schools was an unsympathetic rejection based mostly in legal argument. Martinet presented a petition co-signed by Fayerweather and Tourne, which reminded the Board that they, the petitioners, were those "against whose rights and whose privileges your Board contemplates a grave wrong and palpable injustice." He accused the Board of their obliviousness, not only to Article 135 of the state constitution, but also to the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution of the United States which states that, "No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States." He also pointed to Article Two of the state Constitution that claimed, "all persons without regard to race, color, or previous condition" who are born or naturalized in that state are citizens of that state.¹⁶ Martinet then questioned the legitimacy of the School Board's authority to segregate the schools considering that even the legislature was not allowed to establish any separate institutions on the basis of race. "Can the Legislative creature [the School Board]," Martinet asked, "become more potent than the power which creates its creator, the Legislature?"¹⁷ Martinet went on in his petition to cite other laws which he thought the Board's decision to segregate violated and he concluded that the Board held no legal authority to segregate the public schools.¹⁸

While Martinet's petition read like a legal document, Fayerweather's speech that followed appealed more to the hearts of his listeners. With the pledges of the Governor and those of his own oath of office, Fayerweather questioned

¹⁶ *The New Orleans Daily Democrat*, July 4, 1877. p. 1 c. 2

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, July 4, 1877. p. 1 c. 3

¹⁸ Martinet quoted article 136 of the LA State Constitution which states: "No municipal corporation shall make any rules or regulations contrary to the spirit and intention of article 135," claiming that the Board is a municipal corporation and segregation would be entirely against the intention of article 135. Martinet also quoted article 140 of the state constitution: "No appropriation shall be made by the General Assembly for the support of any school or any private institution of learning whatever." This law, Martinet pointed out, eliminated the Board's option of claiming that the separate schools would not fall within the public sector and, therefore, are not included in article 135. By appropriating money to separate schools, the Board admitted those schools were public, and public

why, "colored men, having been cordially extended an invitation to become members of this Board, and no disposition manifested thus far to set them aside or treat them other than as equals, what reason had we to suppose that the children were better than their parents?" This boiled down to the question of why, if black and white adults were expected to work together peacefully and as equals (as they were on the School Board), black and white children could not be expected or allowed to act in the same way. Fayerweather also said that with the decision to segregate, the "tocsin of alarm has been sounded," and just as blacks were beginning to feel secure as citizens, their political and civil rights were jeopardized. He then threatened the Board by questioning why the "colored" members of the Board might not request their own separate Board and demand that no white teacher teach a colored child.¹⁹

Fayerweather's speech addressed another important point made by Mitchell in his resolution. Mitchell cited the success of the segregated schools in New York, Philadelphia, and Cincinnati in order to argue that it would also work in New Orleans. Fayerweather replied that he attended the integrated schools of Connecticut and Rhode Island, and in neither city did he experience difficulty based on his skin color. He also reminded the Board that the constitutions of New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio are different from Louisiana's, implying that segregation in those states was in fact legal. Fayerweather ended by lamenting the general lack of concern for the public schools of the city pointing to those who do not support a tax to fund public schools, and to "another 'agency' at work, none the less insidious," which has made a propriety of moving white children from the public schools in to private and parochial schools.²⁰ After Fayerweather's conclusion, each member of the Board was given an opportunity to respond.

Craig's response to Mitchell's resolution was unlike those of any other member of the board, black and white included. The responses from the white members focused on technical issues such as whether to refer the resolution to certain committees or if more time should be given before the vote was taken (which was vetoed). Joseph Craig's response, however, stands out as a strange sentiment somewhere between those of Mitchell and Fayerweather. The *Daily Democrat's* report of Craig's statement portrayed him as vacuous and even uninformed, quoting him as:

In favor of a reference, but wanted it more broad. He was in favor of a high 'careering' grade of schools, and he felt both races could get along together if the politicians would die out, himself included. He expected to look down from heaven with Oscar J. Dunn, the saint, and see white boys and black boys in partnership, running a line of steamships to Africa. He wanted expansiveness.²¹

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 1 c. 3

²⁰ This is a reference to Lusher and the Peabody Fund.

²¹ *The New Orleans Daily Democrat*, July 4, 1877. p. 1 c. 4

This news-reporter may have deliberately distorted Craig's speech in order to portray him as ignorant and flighty. Or it may be that Craig did actually lack focus, and among talk of broken laws and committee references embarked on a whimsical tale of sending steamships to Africa. While Craig's response was unusual, it was likely not due to malice on the part of the news-reporter or to a lack of intelligence on the part of Craig. It is more plausible that Craig hoped that his statement would posit him somewhere between the African American integrationists and the white segregationists.

The *Daily Picayune* printed a more coherent report of Craig's statement, one that aids in understanding how Craig used this opportunity to remain on the middle ground. They quoted him as in favor of segregation because he thought it to be to the benefit of the "colored race." He also felt that "prejudice would never be removed until 'infernal politicians' were out of the way." He hoped later, after his death, to look down from heaven to see "white and black men in partnership together sending steamships to Africa."²² Within this statement Craig appealed to both whites (by claiming to be in favor of segregation) and blacks by advocating the end of racism towards African Americans. Craig's response does, however, contain a problematic statement calling into question his true sentiments. While it is unclear what Craig might mean by "sending steamships to Africa," he does go on to tell the tale of a boy he sent to Africa who later became a successful general in the Liberian army. Contrary to the idea that Craig's statement was political and insincere is the notion that Craig truly did advocate segregation for the benefit of African Americans. He may have advocated a complete separation of blacks from whites in order to create a unified and independent black race that would embrace its common roots and possibly return to Africa.

Neither the School Board minutes nor local newspapers report any lengthy speech or petition made by Craig in the months before or after the decision to segregate New Orleans schools. For this reason it is difficult to understand Craig's true feelings on the subject of segregation and black civil rights, or to understand why he voted as he did on July 3, 1877. Assumptions can only be made from analyzing his history, political involvement, speeches made in years prior, and small, seemingly insignificant actions and comments made by him while on the School Board. Some historians argue that Craig was a proponent of his race, and that his actions were for the general benefit of people of color, though many blacks in the 1870s would have disagreed with Craig's view on racial empowerment.²³

The few historians who have discussed Joseph Craig have only skimmed the surface of who he was and what he did. Robert Meyer Jr. offers a brief account of Craig's life in his book, *Names Over New Orleans Public Schools*. Meyer's three-page summary quotes Craig's 1893 obituary and a speech Craig made in 1864 before the First District Emancipation Club. The purpose of Meyer's book, however, is to introduce 113 individuals who gained the honor of having a New Orleans public school named after them, making him unable to go into detail on

Craig's politics and beliefs.²⁴ Joseph Craig is also listed among other prominent blacks of New Orleans in David Rankin's essay, "The Origins of Black Leadership in New Orleans During Reconstruction,"²⁵ which lists the name, antebellum legal status, color, place of residence, occupation, and antebellum literacy of 240 black leaders in New Orleans during Reconstruction.²⁶ Roger Fischer's book *The Segregation Struggle in Louisiana* contains one sentence containing mention of Craig, which tells of an incident in April of 1877 when he was physically removed from a group of whites celebrating the Redemption of the South.²⁷ The fourth and final mention of Craig is in Donald DeVore and Joseph Logsdon's, *Crescent City Schools*. This account acknowledges his presence on the School Board and his vote to resegregate the schools, and it even offers a comment on his political leanings.²⁸ But no study on black politicians in New Orleans or of New Orleans schools during Reconstruction acknowledge Joseph Craig's unique role and influence on the School Board and his motivations regarding school segregation.

The status of Joseph Craig before the Civil War is difficult to ascertain. He is not listed in the New Orleans city directory for 1860 and 1861, and the directory was out of print for the duration of the War. Publication resumed in 1866 and Craig is listed in that year as follows: "Craig, Joseph A., barber, colored, 119 Franklin, d. 1." His absence in the 1860-1861 directory and his sudden appearance in the directory in 1866 (once freed slaves gained citizenship) may suggest Craig was in fact a slave before the War. However, Craig's obituary published in the *Daily Picayune* on August 5, 1893 claimed he "was very popular on the largest ante-bellum Mississippi river boats like the old Natchez, the old S.W. Downs, the Brilliant Star, and others then plying between this city and Louisville, St. Louis, and Cincinnati." According to this obituary, Craig also participated in the Mexican War as an attendant to General Zachary Taylor, and he stayed with the general until Taylor's election to the presidency in 1848. The obituary also stated that, "Craig was born to free parents, and was educated in the schools of Cincinnati, Ohio," and that once the War broke out he left Baton Rouge (though the article does not say when he arrived in Baton Rouge) where he was "living with Dr. Frank Hereford." During the War, the obituary claimed he participated in the Tennessee campaign and later worked in a hospital aiding both Confederate and Union soldiers.

This obituary suggests that Craig was free before the War, stating that not only was he born to free parents, but he also worked as a deckhand on antebellum steamships. However, phrases like "an attendant to Zach Taylor" and "living with Dr. Hereford," indicate that Craig may have been enslaved. In addition, David C. Rankin reported Craig as a slave during the antebellum period claiming

²⁴ Meyer, pp. 48-50

²⁵ Rankin, David C. "The Origins of Black Leadership in New Orleans During Reconstruction" *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 40, No. 3 (Aug., 1974), pp. 417-440

²⁶ The information for both residence and occupation apply for only the years 1860-1861. Rankin, p. 436-440.

²⁷ Fischer p. 142.

²² The *Daily Picayune*, July 4, 1877.

²³ DeVore and Logsdon, p. 87.

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he was literate before the war as he was educated by his master.

Whether Craig was or was not a slave is an important factor in understanding why he voted with the segregationists on the School Board, especially considering the City in question was New Orleans. If Craig was a free man before the Civil War, then he was among a prominent and respected class of free blacks, which consisted predominately of Creoles but also of any free persons of color.²⁹ "Free Negroes of New Orleans," as Louis Harlan notes, "enjoyed a status 'probably unequaled in any other part of the south.' The New Orleans *gens de couleur* included a number of substantial merchants, cotton factors, caterers, doctors and lawyers, even newspaper editors and poets. Negroes also had much social freedom in cosmopolitan New Orleans."³⁰ New Orleans Creoles considered themselves as equal to the white community of the city. That is the underlying explanation for why the Creoles fought hardest for integrated schools. They already considered themselves a part of the white community, and the suggestion of separate schools was like a slap in the face. Harlan suggests that it was not only Creoles who felt this equality with whites, but any free person of color. By this argument it follows that Craig would opt to vote against segregation if he was free before the War. In contrast, this feeling of equality with whites may explain why someone like Craig would be more apt to simply vote along with the white vote and to keep the same mentality as the whites he surrounded himself with; if his white Democratic counterparts are pro-segregation, why shouldn't he be as well?

Craig's status before the War, free or slave, does not detract from his apparent loyalty to the Democratic Party. According to his obituary Craig worked for the Confederacy in the Tennessee campaign (though in what capacity he served is unknown), and, "Being conservative in his principles, with the assistance of the Democrats in the legislature, he was elected sergeant-at-arms in 1874." Other sources also claim he campaigned for Francis T. Nicholls, the Democratic candidate for Louisiana Governor, and for Tilden in the 1876 presidential campaign.³¹ In addition, it was Nicholls himself who appointed Craig to the School Board in the first place. Since Nicholls was a proclaimed segregationist, it follows that Craig, either as an act of loyalty to Nicholls or to simply follow the Democratic platform, would vote in favor of segregation.

Other than Democratic loyalty, there are other political factors that help to explain why Joseph Craig voted against his other black counterparts. The Democrats were already responsible for Craig's success in life including his wartime service to Confederate generals and hospital aid, his election to sergeant-at-arms, and his appointment to the School Board. He naturally may have assumed that if he voted as the Democrats voted, he would be able to rise to even higher political ranks. Association with the Democratic Party proved itself advantageous to Craig as he saw the black Republicans around him struggling for a political voice.

²⁹ Though the definition of "Creole" is still debated, it is assumed to refer to a person of color with strong French cultural roots, a group most of which, in the nineteenth century, were French speaking.

³⁰ Harlan, p. 674

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White Democrats would also have been pleased to have Craig's backing for segregation since it supported their claims that segregation was necessary because the "Negroes" wanted it as well. When Mitchell argued for segregation in his June 22 resolution he claimed, "We recommend this course with less reluctance as we are assured at least nine-tenths of both races warmly approve it."³² John Blassingame in his book *Black New Orleans*, concluded that the white segregationists insisted falsely that most blacks opposed integrated schooling and that "it was only the self-serving politicians, wild-eyed schemers, and especially the mulattoes who favored integrated schools."³³ While it is unlikely that Craig supported segregation only to give steam to white segregationist's arguments, it did undoubtedly make him more popular among white Democrats.

Another possibility for Craig's position is that he had embraced pro-segregationist ideas that would later be espoused by African American leaders such as Booker T. Washington. DeVore and Logsdon claim that, "Many, like Craig, thought that accommodation to segregation would protect other Civil rights, bring social peace, and perhaps even promote some advancement in black public education."³⁴ There was a movement among the African Americans during Reconstruction that advocated the separation of blacks and whites, but even this movement was subdivided. Some blacks felt it best to separate the races to prevent unnecessary racial tension; others wanted blacks separated from whites out of a distrust of whites and a sense of self-help, though Craig never espoused these sentiments explicitly. Craig also may have been trying to strike a compromise between racist segregationists and black integration and civil rights activists. He may have believed that segregation, not only in public schools but also in other areas of life, was the way to promote black rights and power. As historian August Meier describes this train of black thought, "In the same way that Negroes found it either necessary or desirable to have their own conventions, so in the face of an antagonistic white world, Negroes created their own segregated institutions and came to justify their existence."³⁵ The hostility of the white world, Meier argues, was the catalyst for black segregationism.

Other factors also existed in New Orleans at this time that could possibly lead some African Americans to support segregation. During Reconstruction both black and white New Orleanians boasted having the most intelligent black community in the South. An April 28, 1877 article in the *New Orleans Republican* titled "Intelligence Without Schooling" exalted the,

extraordinary development of practical intelligence which has taken place in our colored population within the past ten years. It is positively amazing to hear some of them talk. Their clear statements of the existing state of public affairs, their astute

³² The *New Orleans Daily Democrat*, July 4, 1877.

³³ Blassingame, John, *Black New Orleans*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1973) p. 114

³⁴ DeVore and Logsdon, p. 87

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analysis of the characters of public men... their rushing and burning eloquence in discussing the wrongs and rights of their race, would be listened to with open-mouthed surprise by some of their self styled superiors who know not the mental power which may spring from the exercise of the heart.³⁶

The foregoing quote offers two additional reasons why some African Americans in New Orleans may have felt that segregation would be beneficial. First, it suggests that many African Americans were educated and, therefore, could assume complete political and social responsibility for themselves without the input of whites. Secondly, the article may have also offended black readers with its patronizing tone. The paternalistic attitude of whites might have caused some blacks in New Orleans to advocate a complete separation with the hopes of, as Willis Menard said, "looking at the white man as a common human being and not as a ruler or superior."³⁷ Rankin also quotes Dr. Louis Roudanez, editor of the Creole paper, the *Tribune*, as saying, "It is not the time to follow the path of the white leaders, it is the time to be leaders ourselves."³⁸ While statements like these by black leaders like Menard and Roudanez offer a hint of segregationism, both of these men were avid integrationists. This does, however, prove that the mentality for black-segregationism existed, even if there was not a large movement.

Nothing in the historical record indicates that Joseph Craig felt the same as Dr. Roudanez, and there are factors to suggest that Craig's actions throughout the Civil War and Reconstruction were purely political. In a speech made in 1864 before the First District Emancipation Club, Craig heralded the Union Army as liberators and even encouraged people of color to become soldiers. He espoused a sense of gratefulness for the "thousands" of colored Americans who had gained freedom and citizenship, and he longed for the days when children would be "taught to revere the names of the noble patriots who dared, in the face of prejudice, to stand by their fathers and mothers, the names of Lincoln, of Gen. Banks, of Butler, of Burnside, of Michael Hahn, and all of the patriots of the second revolutionary history of the country."³⁹ This sentiment is interesting coming from the man who supposedly had been supporting the Confederacy during the War and campaigned for the Democrats after the War.

Craig's actions after the vote to segregate the schools further complicate efforts to understand his motivations. A few weeks after the vote, each member of the Board had authority to appoint schoolteachers they felt were competent for the job. Only thirty-four African Americans received appointments, and of that thirty-four, white Board members appointed seven. The expectation was that the majority of black appointments would come from the black members of the Board. As P.B.S. Pinchback resentfully pointed out in

³⁶ *The New Orleans Republican*, April 28, 1877.

³⁷ Quote taken from Rankin, p. 434

³⁸ Rankin, p. 433

³⁹ *The Daily True Delta*, June 12, 1864.

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an editorial in his newspaper, *The Louisianian*, "There was a tacit understanding among the members of the Board, that the colored members would submit...principally colored teachers; hence, a number of white directors doubtlessly paid no attention to colored applicants and therefore placed none on their lists."⁴⁰

Fayerweather, Martinet, and Tourne each appointed more white teachers than black teachers. Fayerweather appointed seven black teachers and fourteen white teachers; Martinet appointed six black teachers and sixteen white teachers; and Tourne appointed five black teachers and sixteen white teachers. Joseph Craig, however, appointed ten black and ten white teachers, going against what anyone, especially black newspaper editor P.B.S. Pinchback expected, considering his vote to resegregate. Claiming that he only appointed Fayerweather, Martinet, and Tourne for a lack of better men, Pinchback added:

The nominations submitted by them will show how far short of their duty the Messrs. Fayerweather, Martinet, and Tourne have fallen. And while on this subject it may not be amiss to remind the gentlemen who conducted the meeting [who] were so desirous to denounce Mr. Jos. E. Craig (sic), of our suggestion at that time, that some 'good may come out of Nazareth.' Be it said to his credit Mr. Craig, in this, a matter of practical interest, has been truer to his people than his pretentious, theoretical colleagues.⁴¹

Although Pinchback had thought Craig was wrong in his vote to end integration, when it came to pragmatic goals Craig had proved himself capable.

This incident can either detract or add to the idea that Craig's actions were merely political. If he were trying to appease his Democratic counterparts, it is more likely Craig would have appointed more white teachers than black. Another possibility, however, is that he was simply trying to save face. Craig already pleased the white Democrats by voting in favor of segregation. The teacher appointments were his opportunity to conciliate with his black colleagues. Either way, this was an excellent political move on Craig's part. He not only benefited African Americans by putting blacks in important positions, but he also received good publicity from a prominent black leader (Pinchback). Also, by appointing a group that was half black and half white, neither group could claim he slighted them.

If Joseph Craig's purpose in endorsing segregation was not political (i.e., loyalty to the Democrats) and was instead a righteous move for a unified black race, he, as an African American in New Orleans, appears to have been alone in his belief. The Creole and colored people of New Orleans pushed actively for school integration, and there is no substantial record of any black-segregation movement in the city. Craig's vote on the School Board is the only hint that there was a black-segregationist movement in New Orleans.

⁴⁰ *The Louisianian*, October 20, 1877.

Craig's position on segregation cannot be explained solely by a belief in black "self-help" and the betterment of the black community by a separation from whites. Not only did Craig himself never explicitly state this idea, but New Orleans as a whole lacked a black segregationist movement.⁴² Though Craig claimed to have founded the "Colored Conservative Club" of New Orleans, there is no clear record of this club, and it did not seem to have an impact on the segregation issue in New Orleans.⁴³ The only resounding response from the black community at this time was in favor of integration.

Other evidence that indicates Craig's actions were political was the discrepancies between himself and other non-Creole blacks in New Orleans. Louis Martinet was a former slave who advocated integration in the 1870s to the end of his life.⁴⁴ Two decades after the school segregation struggle Martinet continued to fight segregation and played a major role in bringing Homer Plessey's case to the Supreme Court.⁴⁵ Based on Martinet's petition to the School Board on July 3rd, 1877, he clearly did not share Craig's opinion regarding the segregation of public schooling. Martinet's support of integration opposes the theory mostly people of color who were free before the War became pro-integration, while those who were slaves became pro-segregation. If both Martinet and Craig were ex-slaves, then it was likely Craig's political ties that differed him from someone like Martinet. Martinet, a Republican, lacked the incentive of political status and security that Craig received from the Democrats. Even if Craig inwardly supported integration, he may have been reluctant to do so outwardly out of a fear of losing Democratic favor and office.

In a cosmopolitan city with a minority population dominated by active Creole integrationists, it is unlikely that an African American proponent of segregation could successfully espouse and work towards his beliefs. Not only would he lack supporters, but he would also be working against the powerful Creoles. Joseph Craig's apparent support of school segregation stemmed more from a political desire to court both white Democrats and black leaders to his side. His numerous contradictions, such as praising Union generals while serving the Confederacy, and claiming to support black rights while voting against the will of the African Americans of New Orleans regarding segregation, proves that Craig was not entirely loyal to any one set of beliefs.

Despite his contradictions, Craig never received bad publicity for waffling between the issues that deeply divided southern society. The other three African American members of the School Board never publicly denounced Craig for his July 3rd vote, nor for his political values. White Democratic publications tended to

⁴² A term borrowed from Meier's *Negro Thought in America, 1880-1915*.

⁴³ The *Daily Picayune*, August 5, 1893; DeVore and Logsdon, p. 87.

⁴⁴ Foner, Eric, *Freedom's Lawmakers*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1996) p. 142.

⁴⁵ Medley, Kieth Weldon. *We as Freeman: Plessy v. Ferguson*. (Gretna: Pelican Publishing Company, 2003) p. 17

praise Craig – some for holding their beliefs, others for his taking "a great interest in his race."⁴⁶ And, P.B.S. Pinchback, a highly respected African American leader, even publicly complimented him.

Craig's politically driven actions are not necessarily a comment on his moral character. By 1877, African Americans had only held full citizenship for eleven years; and to be a black politician in 1877 meant that you were among a small and distinguished group of people. This, coupled with the fact that by 1877 whites in the South were systematically removing blacks from office, meant that African Americans had to use any means possible to hold on to their positions. Considering that he lacked Creole status and was possibly an ex-slave, Craig had significant political success. It is not surprising then, that Craig would protect his position against the threat of removal by both black and white leaders by simply appeasing both sides.

While African American leaders like Booker T. Washington would later lead substantial campaigns in favor of segregation in other cities in the South, the political and social climate of New Orleans in the 1870s did not lend itself to a black-segregationist movement. The city already had a history of racial integration, which the Creoles who lived here during the antebellum period were used to. In addition, of all the cities in the South, New Orleans was considered the most liberal and progressive; therefore, the movement towards segregation was an unexpected turn in political and social practice. The large presence of Creole integrationists overrode any realistic attempt any other person of color would have had at espousing any beliefs contradictory to their own, making a general black segregationist movement in New Orleans unlikely during the 1870s. This fact serves only to highlight the evidence that Craig's support of segregation was political, not part of a movement to promote African American rights.

Joseph Craig's actions correlate with the absence of a black segregationist movement in New Orleans in that he never made himself an active segregationist through any type of speech or publishing campaign. The difficulty of understanding Joseph Craig's politics and beliefs is symbolic of the tenuous positions African Americans held near the end of Reconstruction. Craig is an example of an African American barely hanging on to political and social position and who, as a result, never committed fully to one side of any issue. Beyond his actual vote to segregate New Orleans public schools, and a few subtle comments he made during School Board meetings, Craig was never an assertive advocate of segregation. He tended to keep his feelings regarding segregation shrouded in enigmatic language leaving his audience to assume his beliefs. Figures like Joseph Craig are not often studied historically. When historians set out to understand African Americans in the South during Reconstruction, they usually focus on those illustrious figures that fought against the odds for human rights. The others, like Joseph Craig, often go unnoticed among the prominent African American leaders of the time who pioneered the black civil rights movement, resulting in neglect of the other African Americans who still managed to gain political status.

⁴⁶ The *Daily Picayune*, August 5, 1893.

The history of African historiography mirrors the history of historiography in other places in that each new voice in the field and each new thought is, quite generally speaking, a reaction to people and thoughts that have come before, beginning with the European paradigm of history. However, the history of African historiography is quite different than in other places in that the European paradigm was imposed on Africans as a part of European colonization of the African continent. This colonization process was, to say the least, not just that of people living in a new territory while retaining ties with the parent state, but it was also an imposition of European religious, philosophical, economic, and government systems on the indigenous peoples of Africa. If Europeans found Africans as having civilization at all it was peculiar in nature, resisted change and progress, and was considered barbarous and savage.¹ Hence the colonizers found it in the best interest of Africans to adopt Western values and deny the African way of life.

Because the story of African historiography begins with European historiography, we must first look to Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831), the father of modern historiography, who was a major component of the era of the great German philosophers of history (this era also included such great minds as J. G. Herder and Leopold van Ranke). Prior to this era, history in Europe was a discipline for monks and other theological personae and had been since the infiltration of Christianity into great European empires.² This layer of theology was placed upon an already existing, yet still maturing, historiography that had gone from the storytelling of Homer to the chronicles of Michael Psellus. The advent of the Enlightenment in the early eighteenth century saw the replacement of revelation by reason in the sciences and in the humanities, but it wasn't until Hegel's era that this replacement fully matured in the philosophy of history.

Hegel was a philosopher, not an historian per se, but history was central to his philosophy. In following with the values of the Enlightenment, he replaces God with the universe, which he calls the Absolute or the World Spirit, and replaces faith with rational thought. The ultimate truth occurs with the unfolding of the Absolute to itself, and since people are a part of the Absolute, the Absolute can be revealed to us through knowledge, or cognition. Cognition is realized through the dialectic, the question and answer process most identified with Socrates.³ History is of utmost importance because the realization of the Absolute actually presents itself through the dialectic of the course of human affairs, which, of course, is history.⁴

¹ Maine, Henry. *Popular government*. New York: H. Holt and Company, 1886, p.132.

² Stanford, Michael. *A Companion to the Study of History*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1994. p.238.

³ *Ibid.*, p.262.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.264.

In order for people to realize the absolute through the cognition of history, a people must have history and, according to Hegel, not everyone had that capability. To be historical, a people must have self-awareness, evident through laws, and the written word.⁵ These qualifications left out all of sub-Saharan Africa to Hegel (although the Swahili Coast and the Mali Empire had laws and writing, it was fairly insular because they were implemented by clerics and because both of these areas were far from the western coast of Africa, the access point for most Europeans onto the continent). In his introduction to *The Philosophy of History*, written in 1831, Hegel made it quite clear that sub-Saharan Africans were not mature enough to own these characteristics for historicity: "In Negro life the characteristic point is the fact that consciousness has not yet attained to the realization of any substantial objective existence – as for example, God or Law – in which the interest of man's volition is involved and in which he realizes his own being."⁶ He goes on about the African by stating, "We must lay aside all thought of reverence and morality – all that we call feeling – if we would rightly comprehend him, there is nothing harmonious with humanity to be found in this type of character."⁷ So Hegel considered Africa as "the Unhistorical, Undeveloped Spirit, still involved in the conditions of mere nature."⁸ Because Hegel found Africans so undeveloped he actually advocated the slavery of African peoples: "Slavery is in and for itself *injustice*, for the essence of humanity is *Freedom*; but for this man must be matured."⁹

Hegel's racist views were not new to his era. It was not uncommon for Europeans to think such things about Africans, even and especially if, they had never stepped foot on African soil, as was the case with Hegel. Many Europeans thought sub-Saharan Africans to be less than human partially due to accounts of slave-traders and other people involved in the profitable Atlantic slave trade. These accounts were merely justifications for the shipment of Africans to the New World, but they were highly effective because they spoke of the inhumanity of the Africans in their brutal religious practices and social norms. Slave-trader Archibald Dalziel, for instance, who wrote *A History of Dahomy* (1783) "argues that greater good was done by exporting slaves to American plantations than by leaving them in West Africa, where they were likely to become victims of the practice of human sacrifice".¹⁰ It must be noted here that attitudes of Europeans toward North Africa were quite different than their attitudes toward sub-Saharan Africa. Europeans felt much more akin to North Africa, and Hegel expressed this by calling the region "a magnificent territory, on which Carthage once lay – the site of Modern Morocco,

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.181.

⁶ Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. *The Philosophy of History*. Rev. ed. New York: Willey Book Co., 1944. p.93.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p.93.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p.99.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.99.

¹⁰ Fage, J.D., "Slavery and the Slave Trade in the Context of West African History." *The Journal of African History*. Vol.10, no.3 (1969), p.393.

Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli. This part was to be – must be attached to Europe."¹¹ These disparate views of North versus Sub-Saharan Africa lasted well into the twentieth century (and to a lesser degree into the present day). It was common for the Western world to think that any characteristic of greatness in Africa was the work of other peoples. A perfect example was the ruins of Zimbabwe that were built circa 1000 AD with local granite. The Reverend Willoughby wrote of the ruins in 1923, "It is... astonishing to find scattered over Mashonaland, Matabeleland, and adjacent districts [present-day Zimbabwe], hundreds of ruined stone buildings that are not suggestive of either Egyptian or European inspiration".¹² There were many theories of who the builders of these great stone buildings were, and many of the theories were anachronistic, from Solomon's Red Sea fleet to the Phoenicians, from the Egyptians to the Bantu. Not able to make any conclusive argument for one over the others, the Reverend ends with, "whatever their date, these buildings testify to the long sojourn in this country of another race, which had completely disappeared before Europeans came".¹³ Historian William McNeill is not as blatant as the good Reverend, but in *The Rise of the West* (1963) he attributes the buildings in Zimbabwe to the gold trade of Arabs along the coast of the Indian Ocean¹⁴ and attributes the greatness of the West African kingdoms of Mali and Ghana to Muslims (and while it may be the case that these aspects of ancient Africa were influenced by Eurasian civilizations, but it does not make them any more civilized than other African societies of their time, just more familiar to Western minds).¹⁵

Although the missionary movement was present in all of the nineteenth-century, the latter half of the nineteenth-century saw a large influx of British Evangelicals to sub-Saharan Africa to build missions, complete with makeshift hospitals, schools, and chapels. Although their intentions were good, they were steeped with the arrogance of Western industrialism (that was indebted to the institution of slavery for providing an abundance of raw materials and an abundance of wage laborers, previously agriculturalists, to work in factories) and Christianity. For all of their misgivings, however, these missions did help socialize Africans to Europeans by teaching them Western languages, religions, and history, but mostly without any regard to traditional African societies. Because of their success in educating Africans, mission schools were soon brought under the wing of colonial governments and used as a training ground for new recruits to spread the good word of colonialism as Native bureaucrats, teachers, and the like: "The Western system of education as it emerged was a system for recruiting individual members of a new elite with varying levels of education as auxiliaries in the colonial system."¹⁶ Once some Africans got a taste of Western education and realized that it was

¹¹ Hegel. *The Philosophy of History*. p. 93.

¹² Willoughby, William Charles. *Race Problems in the New Africa*. Oxford: the Clarendon Press, 1923. p. 20.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p.24.

¹⁴ McNeill, William. *The Rise of the West: a history of the human community*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963. p.481.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.560.

¹⁶ *Educational Process and Historiography in Africa*. Paris: Unesco, 1985. p.15.

beneficial to them because it was the base of this new elite, the demand for education grew. The Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone, founded in 1827 by the Church Missionary Society, affiliated itself with Durham University in 1876. There were few other opportunities for higher education at this time, and it wasn't until 1945 that the Colonial University Grants Advisory Committee was established and agreed that the two other existing colleges in West Africa, one in Ghana and one in Nigeria, should be affiliated with the University of London in order to fulfill degree-granting requirements.¹⁷

During the onset of higher education in Africa, colonial powers still had a very imperialistic view of history. The British specifically thought they were doing Africans a great favor by bringing Africa into the stream of history, and by teaching Africans about the history of civilized countries in hopes that it would inspire Africans to want to become more civilized.¹⁸ Caroline Neale in *Writing "Independent" History* (1985) points out the particular characteristics of history textbooks from this era: 1) "the period of white contact usually got much more space than all of the time proceeding it"; 2) "...events in Europe were given a disproportionate amount of space"; 3) "...within Africa, events in which Europeans were involved were considered more important than ones which purely concerned Africa"; and, 4) "Africans were cast in a passive role, receiving various kinds of benefits and blows, the decisions affecting them being made largely by Europeans."¹⁹

After World War II, many African scholars felt growing discontent at what they were taught about African history, but they realized the importance of modern European historiography, even as applied to African history, for it made an otherwise obscure history more acceptable in most academic circles. Documentation is of utmost importance in academia, but the written word was not used in most of sub-Saharan Africa before the advent of Europeans to the continent. Hence, African scholars were stuck between a rock and a hard place – how to write truly African history while keeping to the universal standards of academic institutions? In 1947, K. O. Dike, a Nigerian scholar, found an advisor at the University of London for his Ph.D. dissertation that accepted his topic and his proposed methods for information retrieval. His dissertation was "Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta, 1830-1885," relied heavily on "oral testimonies and oral traditions to adequately reflect the African side of the story."²⁰ What is exceptional about Dike's work was his success in showing the distinction of colonial and African history, and that his documentation of oral material was acceptable to his highest critics – scholars at the University of London.²¹ By 1956, Dike was the first African

to become a professional historian, as that was the year his dissertation was published as a book by the Oxford University Press.

Dike opened the door for other African historians and more radical non-African Africanists who wanted to break free of the stigmas attached to African history as a viable discipline in and of itself, not as a history of Europeans in Africa. Part of their task was to justify the interest in African history, for Hegel's statements about the unhistorical nature of Africa was still at the forefront of many historians' minds, African and European alike. Great African societies of African pre-colonial history became an emphasis in the 1950s and 1960s, and where better to start than Egypt? Cheikh Anta Diop of Senegal stressed the importance of this civilization to Africa because, in his philosophy of history, pharaonic Egypt's essence was black, not Arabian or European, which was (and still is) popular belief.²² He went further to state that classical Greeks were highly influenced by Egyptians: "Pythagorean mathematics, the theory of the four elements of Thales of Miletus, Epicurian materialism, Platonic idealism, Judaism, Islam, and modern science are rooted in Egyptian cosmogony and science."²³ Diop's philosophy was very radical, but it gave Africans a new sense of cultural power, to think that the founders of Western civilization learned from the Egyptians, who Diop and others believed were actually of the African continent and not a foreign race.

Whereas scholars like Diop were manipulating existing paradigms to show the grandness that is inherent in African cultures, other scholars were interested in writing histories of more recent pre-colonial eras. Basil Davidson neatly summed up the dichotomy of European history and African history: "The literacy of the Greeks afforded a pleasantly helpful starting point for European history. But once you accept that literacy in itself is no adequate guide to social development – to the stuff of history – where do you begin in Africa?"²⁴ It was becoming more evident that the line between pre-history and history was blurring and the use of oral histories and traditions was the way of the future. To make this usage acceptable, a methodology was needed and, as methodology was not in the vocabulary of most historians at this time, a partnership had to form between history and the social sciences, i.e., sociology, anthropology, and linguistics. In 1961, Dike, by now the first Nigerian to head the History Department at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria, became director of the Institute of African Studies, an academic center based on inter-disciplinary cooperation between history and the social sciences.²⁵ This cooperation had great benefits for historians, for they now had the freedom to delve into ways of retrieving information that was not just based in the written word. But this kindled the debate on whether or not history

¹⁷ Hussey, E. R. J. "Higher Education in West Africa." *African Affairs*. Vol. 44, no. 177 (1945, Oct.), p.167.

¹⁸ Neale, Caroline. *Writing "Independent" History: African historiography, 1960-1980*. Westport, Ct.: Greenwood Press, 1985. p.35.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.35.

²⁰ Ajayi, J. F. Ade. *Tradition and Change in Africa: the essays of J. F. Ade. Ajayi*. Trenton, NJ: Africal World Press, Inc., 2000. p.378.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p.378.

²² Mudimbe, V. Y. and Jewsiewicki, B., eds. *The African Past Speaks*. Folkestone, England: Dawson, 1980. p.2.

²³ Ohaegbulam, Festus Ugboaja. *Towards an Understanding of the African Experience from Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*. London: University Press of America, 1990. p.63.

²⁴ Davidson, Basil. *Can We Write African History?* Los Angeles: African Studies Center, University of California, 1965. p.10.

²⁵ Ajayi. *Tradition and Change in Africa*. p.431.

should be a social science or a humanity that is still taking place today. J. F. Ade Ajayi, who later took Dike's position as Head of the History Department at the University of Ibadan, stated that some "historians, including myself, are sufficiently old-fashioned to continue to view history as a discipline in the Humanities, concerned more with man than with social formations, more in both his universal and unique characteristics."²⁶ Ajayi was not the only historian to be so old-fashioned. Many historians complained that sociology was too full of jargon. Conversely, many sociologists saw historians as having no methodologies, or ever being objective enough to not view history through the lens of contemporary concerns.

Indeed, the last argument of sociologists can be a hard one to contradict, especially in light of the "Golden Age of African historiography"²⁷ that dawned with Dike and was in full swing with Davidson and Ajayi. This Age was a reaction to colonial historiography, and it mirrored the de-colonial process that was happening outside of academia throughout Africa in the late 1950s and into the 1960s. Many of the nationalist movements sought to drum up legitimacy for independence. Since African historians were already on that quest in an historical sense, they became partners with leaders of nationalist movements throughout the continent, many of which became the governments of post-colonial African nations. Historical legitimacy "provided the necessary time-depth and evidence of the performance of independent African policies"²⁸ needed by nationalists to further support claims of successful self-rule. The truisms for which nationalist historiography sought evidence were: 1) that Africans are not essentially different than other people; 2) a sense of history and the dynamics of change were essential characteristics of human societies; 3) European activities could not substitute for African history with Africans as the "central dramatis personae"; 4) "Africans were the subjects whose initiative determined, for most of their history, the direction of change"; and 5) Africans are not "perpetual objects" of others' initiatives.²⁹

Meeting all of these truisms in a historiography was extremely difficult, especially while doing it in a nationalist framework since African nations had no homogeneity, which is normally a pre-requisite for nationhood. The Partition of Africa, founded at the Berlin Conference (1884-1885), established political borders for different colonial powers that were then further divided by respective European nations to better suit their governing needs. Unfortunately, these needs did not take into consideration any of the borders that were either already established or were in the process of being established by indigenous African peoples. As Ajayi criticized these boundaries, he and other nationalist historians understood that "those same boundaries became the basis for promoting nationalism as a necessary

condition for demanding self-government and independence."³⁰

The nationalist movement was much more difficult in twentieth-century Africa than it had been in nineteenth-century Europe. In 1774, J.G. Herder (1744-1803), a philologist and contemporary of Hegel, wrote *Also a Philosophy of History*. He believed that the nation (a group of people born with similar origins) was a growing and dynamic entity.³¹ People of a nation "derive both their life and their values from it."³² Because a nation defines its people and because a people define their nation, a nation is constantly growing. In Africa, the boundaries Europeans imposed that were kept as post-colonial national boundaries, homogenous groups were split between two or more countries, and one country might have hundreds of indigenous languages and possibly just as many different religious beliefs. There was also the possibility of previously existing alliances or rivalries between different ethnicities being completely ignored whereas they should have been a part of the organic nation-building process that was destroyed by colonization.³³

The task of the African national historian becomes much more complicated. There is no pre-colonial history of different African nations because African nations as we know them did not exist in pre-colonial times. How does one find a national history, then? Some historians retold certain regional or ethnic events and applied them to the nation the particular region or ethnic group in question lies in, so suddenly there is a "national tradition".³⁴ Other historians took a more pan-Africanist approach. The saga of the king Shaka Zulu, for instance, was now a source of pride for all Africans, not just the Zulu people of southern Africa. Ajayi's justification for this is that "it was of course easier to conjure up sentiments of solidarity as Africans than as Nigerians, of Ghanaians, Malawians, or Ugandans."³⁵ Again, these problems facing African historians in this "Golden Age of African historiography" mirrored that of potential governments. Where historians were looking for a common history in a particular nation, statesmen had the task of "operating political systems made up of peoples who will continue to differ in languages and culture."³⁶

African nationalist historiography had many critics from many different ideological schools. Many European historians found national history to be obsolete, which it was, in Europe. Europe's nations were, in most cases, firmly established but in Africa the task was very much at hand because nationhood had either just been won, or it was still pending. Another criticism was that nationalist history of the 1960s distorted the historical picture of African progress in order to gain favor from European statesmen. Kingdoms and tales of territorial expansion

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.450.

²⁷ Fyfe, Christopher, ed. *African Studies Since 1945: a tribute to Basil Davidson*. London: Longman Group Limited, 1976. p.18. Term coined by Terence O. Ranger in "Toward a Usable African Past", first essay in this text.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.454.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.438.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.381.

³¹ Stanford. *A Companion to the Study of History*. p. 253.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 254.

³³ Neale. *Writing "Independent" History*. p. 11

³⁴ Jewsiewicki, Bogumil. "African Historical Studies." *African Studies Review*. Vol. 32, no.3 (1989, Dec.), p. 4.

³⁵ Ajayi. *Tradition and Change*. p. 380.

³⁶ Wrigley, C. C. "Historicism in Africa: Slavery and State Formation." *African Affairs*. Vol.70, no.279 (1971, April), p.120.

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took precedence over nomadic societies or tales of communalism. These distortions range from tyrannical monarchies now viewed in a positive light to show the African ability to rule (as was Shaka Zulu's case), to placing a great emphasis on the heroes of the resistance movement against colonial rule that were moderate and worked with Europeans and all but ignoring more traditional African resisters that used more tribal methods and could, therefore, be considered a step backward instead of progressive.³⁷

The main critics of African nationalist historiography were of the Marxist variety, whose base in Africa was at the University of Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania. The general complaint was that nationalist history did not address the needs of the people because it was too idealistic, and that the grand nations historians try to boast of existed only in the imagination of the historian. Marxism gained a stronghold in much of Africa, as it did in much of the rest of the world at this time because of the influences of the Soviet Union. This was at the height of the Cold War and the superpowers were not just out to influence governments and economies, but also ideologies. Many African scholars tended toward Marxism because they saw that the de-colonization process in Africa did not solve all of Africa's problems, those of hunger, poverty, illiteracy, etc., as many people hoped it would. Many historians had difficulties accepting Marxism, with all of its dogma and critiques, and Ajayi stated, "There are no easy answers to these criticisms which seek to replace one ideology, with its strengths and weaknesses, by another, with its strengths and weaknesses."³⁸

• Marxist historians took the same histories the nationalists uncovered and tried to fit it into a Marxist framework, without much success. Marxism is inherently based on capitalism, a Western economic mode, so it was impossible for pre-colonial African history to easily fit into that mold. While Marxist criticisms of the nationalist school were valid and made people look at all levels of society and the dynamics within societies,³⁹ it was no less based in European ideologies than nationalism. As Jewsiewicki questioned, "How can one build a radically different society when political and social actions are based on an analytical framework immersed in nineteenth century epistemology?"⁴⁰ Thus calling for a revolutionary movement to end conflict in African countries (which usually caused more conflict than get rid of it) and looking back to pre-colonial African to find traces of feudalism were not terribly effective in solving problems of African history.

There was a growing need for a historiography with which all peoples of Africa could identify. Wrigley's critique sums up the frustration of the era - "in the world of super powers and international corporations and common markets, the message of historians and political scientists to the peoples of Africa is, apparently, that they must, at no matter what cost in suffering and injustice, construct

small replicas of the nineteenth century European nation-state."⁴¹ As the nations of the world became more entwined in global economics, so there was a new ideology with a decidedly economic slant. André Gunder Frank was a Marxist who, in the late 1960s, studied underdevelopment in Latin America.⁴² That region was full of disenchantment with the moderate policies of the United Nations on world economics and people looked to the seeming success of Cuba's independence from economic reliance on the United States, due to the revolution and policies of Fidel Castro. Frank witnessed foreign aid and investment not actually do anything to help the economies of Latin America, and his explanation for this lie in his underdevelopment theory. Frank makes a clear distinction between undevelopment and underdevelopment because undevelopment has a connotation of never having known development. Underdevelopment is the flip side of economic development because most development is uneven according to where the center of the development activity lies, and its periphery that supports development, but in the process, gets underdeveloped by the "loss and misappropriation of economic surplus."⁴³ Economic development and underdevelopment had 3 historical phases – mercantilist (1500-1770), industrial capitalist (1770-1870) and imperialist (1870-1930) – that illustrated how underdevelopment is not an economic state that just occurs; it grew over many generations of international trade and colonization to get to the neo-colonialism phase we are in now.⁴⁴ Over time in Africa, Europeans took all of the most fertile land for white settlers to farm on, and the most mineral-rich land for mines. In this way, they were guaranteed to not have competition from smaller-scale indigenous farmers, and, since they displaced so many people, they were also guaranteed a workforce. Then Europeans established a monetary economic system by paying workers with money needed to pay taxes and goods sold by Europeans. This process made Africans totally dependent on European colonizers, in the form of governments or international companies.⁴⁵

Frank states, "...in chainlike fashion the contradictions of expropriation/appropriation and metropolis/satellite polarization totally penetrate the underdeveloped world creating an 'internal' structure of underdevelopment."⁴⁶ A new African economic élite formed because new governments put themselves as the middlemen between international companies and the resources they needed from African soil.⁴⁷ This created a deeper and more pervasive underdevelopment because the idea of the center developing while the periphery underdevelops was now taking place within the peripheral country itself as well as on an international scale.

³⁷ Wrigley. "Historicism in Africa," p.124.

³⁸ Fyfe. *African Studies Since 1945: a tribute to Basil Davidson* p.32

³⁹ Frank, André Gunder. *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1969. p.xi.

⁴⁰ Frank, André Gunder. *Dependent Accumulation and Underdevelopment*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979. p.xi.

⁴¹ Frank. *Dependent Accumulation and Underdevelopment*. pp. 160-161.

⁴² Frank. *Capitalism and Underdevelopment*. p. xxi.

⁴³ Shaw, Timothy M. "Beyond Neo-Colonialism" *The Journal of Modern African Studies*. Vol. 20, no.2 (1982). pp. 239-261. p. 249

³⁷ Neale. *Writing "Independent" History*. pp. 12-14.

³⁸ Ajayi. *Tradition and Change*. pp. 403-405.

³⁹ Neale. *Writing "Independent" History*. p.158.

⁴⁰ Jewsiewicki. "African Historical Studies." p. 36.

Another Development of Underdevelopment Theorist was Walter Rodney, a historian from Guyana and author of *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, was closely affiliated with the Dar-es-Salaam school where he wrote the book in its entirety. In the introduction, Rodney states,

This book derives from a concern with the contemporary African situation. It delves into the past only because otherwise it would be impossible to understand how the present came into being and what the trends are for the near future. In this search for what is now called 'underdevelopment' in Africa, the limits of inquiry have had to be fixed as far apart as the fifteenth century, on the one hand, and at the end of the colonial period, on the other hand.⁴⁸

As one can see, Rodney's thesis is very similar to Frank's in that they arise out of a current situation, and they both begin their historical quest in the sixteenth century. But while both Rodney and Frank deal with the Development of Underdevelopment Theory, Rodney was an Africanist whereas Frank was not. Rodney wrote other books on African history, as well as politically radical books influenced by Pan-Africanism and the Black Power movement of the late 1960s.⁴⁹

Although the Development of Underdevelopment Theory was radical for its time, it was not the answer to many scholars. Some critiques were that it posed a mono-causal explanation for everything gone wrong in Africa since contact with Europeans, and that it was limited and incomplete.⁵⁰ However, it did succeed in shifting focus away from politics and toward economics.

It has been the growing nature of Globalization and neo-colonialism that have brought about new ideologies that try to shift historiography away from the nineteenth-century Western paradigm of history that has influenced every history that followed since its inception – from imperialism to Marxism, from military history to intellectual history. There was a particular need in previously colonized nations to break from the dogma that all worthwhile thought began in the West and spread with the onset of imperialism. C. Tsehloane Keto, author of *Vision and Time* (2001), argues for an African-centered paradigm. "This thematical process and its practical implication originated in part from the search for intellectual liberation by African thinkers schooled in European-centered (Western) knowledge systems."⁵¹ The new paradigm would make Africa the center of knowledge for and about Africans in Africa and throughout the African Diaspora. Part of this process would even change the way people view geographical and cultural regions, as terms such as 'East Africa' and 'the Middle East' are little more than "anachronistic post

eighteenth-century Western designations that implicitly posit a pre-existing separation between these realms."⁵²

Since nineteenth-century Western historiography, every historian has attempted to write an objective history through impartial methods, as per Leopold von Ranke. Although that is the ultimate goal, post-modern historians realize that is nearly impossible for the essence of the historian not to come through the history he chose to write about, the sources he saw as more important than others, and in his narrative. "It is quite true that facts do not speak for themselves, and that material is selected by historians according to their interests and interpreted according to their convictions, both of which are related to their social position and the times in which they live."⁵³ For every fact that is brought to the surface by a historian, many others may be overlooked or ignored (hopefully unconsciously as opposed to deliberately) in order to produce a narrative that supports their thesis, which, according to Neale, reflects contemporary social views. As Neale states, "Each intellectual generation has seen what The Times called for, and believed that they called for the truth, and has gone out to look for it. The key historiographical questions, therefore, is how an historian sees The Times."⁵⁴

Although postmodernism, or the deconstruction of history, is about breaking from the nineteenth-century Western historiography, it is aware that most cultures of the world are rooted in this paradigm. Therefore a call for revolutionary historiographical reform, as presented by Marxist historians (while still very firmly planted in this historiography), is unattainable. "As knowledge is socially produced and strongly related to the power relationships, one cannot expect a radical epistemological break to occur in a society that is a historical product of nineteenth-century economic and social systems."⁵⁵ One cannot break with something if one never knew it in the first place, so this imperialistic nineteenth-century epistemology must be a pre-requisite for people to make conscious decisions to leave it. Without modern historiography, post-modern historiography would not exist. Take Temu and Swai's claim that, "Real history has to deal with the dialectical relationship between the various factors, and in that way reveal the contradictions and complexities of society, if it is to avoid serving a new set of exploiters."⁵⁶ Although members of the radical Dar es Salaam school of African historiography, there is no mistaking the nineteenth-century influence in this statement as it recalls both Hegel and Marx.

As noted, the historiography of Africa is related to the historiography of other places. It starts with the European nineteenth-century paradigm, which starts a cause and effect pattern throughout the twentieth-century and into the present day. To emulate Ajayi, the history of historiography is the replacing of one ideology,

⁴⁸ Rodney, Walter. *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1982. p.ii.

⁴⁹ Lewis, Rupert Charles. *Walter Rodney's Intellectual and Political Thought*. Barbados: The Press University of the West Indies, 1998. p. xii-xiv.

⁵⁰ Ajayi. *Tradition and Change*. p.xxiv.

⁵¹ Keto, C. Tsehloane. *Vision and Time: historical perspective on an African-centered paradigm*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2001. p.xii

⁵² Keita, Maghan, ed. *Conceptualizing/Re-Conceptualizing Africa: the Construction of African Historical Identity*. Leiden: Brill, 2002.

⁵³ Neale. *Writing "Independent" History*. p.152.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p.19.

⁵⁵ Jewsiewicki. "African Historical Studies," p.1

⁵⁶ Temu and Swai. *Historians and Africanist History*. p.82

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with its strengths and weaknesses, by another, with its strengths and weaknesses. No matter the school of thought, African historians look to Africa's past in order to find an identity that had been nearly lost. Africa's history is full of turmoil, but many historians now believe that the best way of dealing with it is not to dwell on its past hardships, but to balance them with greater moments in African history. Colonialism was a major player in the recent history of Africa and so many ideologies of the twentieth-century were formed out of reaction to it – nationalism sought to break from colonialism, Marxism sought to stage revolutions against traces of colonialism left in independent nations, and the theory of underdevelopment sought to undo economic colonialism and neo-colonialism that had penetrated deep into almost every post-colonial nation. Diop went so far as to say that colonialism was “a period corresponding to a sort of descent into hell and deserving only to be forgotten.”⁵⁷ Whereas this statement is impossible (how can such a monumental event as a ‘descent into hell’ be forgotten), it does try to focus attention to the history of Africans in Africa, not of Africans as subjects of others. Many African scholars have realized that colonialism was just another period in the narrative of African history and that one must look at this history in its entirety to gain a sense of historical identity, for, regardless of Hegel's notion of Africa being unhistorical and stagnant, there is still much to be learned of and from Africa's past.

⁵⁷ Mudimbe. *History Making in Africa*. p.1

The Desegregation of Southern Higher Education: Doorway to the American Dream

by: Dawson McCall

“Virtue, like any other faculty, can only be acquired by education...[and] as the end of the State as a whole is one, the education of all the citizens must be one and the same...”

- Aristotle

Equality and freedom in the American experience has historically been a topic of great controversy and passionate disagreement, at times perpetuating racial and social animosities that have caused social unrest and at times rioting and revolution. From the Dred Scott decision to *Roe v. Wade* (1973) the freedom espoused in the Declaration of Independence has been a prize for which generations of Americans have pursued. This fight has been waged in the courtrooms and corridors of the U.S legal system, on the streets and sidewalks of America's rural and urban communities, and within the hearts and minds of America's citizens. Throughout history Americans of all backgrounds, whether white, black, male, female, foreign, or domestic, have been willing to die for freedom and equality. However, it is ironic that the history of a country that takes so much pride in its basic foundations of freedom and equality has been marred by such blatantly appalling instances of inequality and oppression - the greatest of these violations coming in the form of the slavery that plagued the United States throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The byproduct of this institution would be a system of social segregation, justified by the “separate but equal” doctrine handed down by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), which helped to perpetuate a racist dogma within American society and culture that would last well into the twentieth century. Through a system of social, economic, mental, and physical oppression, American segregationists were able to implant and cultivate a system of dual citizenship, a system that perpetuated the inferiority and suppression of African-Americans. Although concentrating itself in the American South, this suppression took its shape in the form of separate facilities for blacks and whites throughout the country. After the abolishment of slavery with the thirteenth amendment, and with the blessing of the Supreme Court in the *Plessy* case, white segregationists set out on a quest to “put the Negro in his place” within American society. The courts' ruling that facilities could be maintained for separate races, as long as they were “equal” under the law, made segregation an integral part of the southern, and to a large extent the American, way of life. However, in the lone dissent of the High Court's 1896 decision, Supreme Court Justice John Marshall Harlan stated his belief that:

...in the view of the Constitution, in the eye of the law, there is in this country no superior, dominant, ruling class of citizens. There is no caste here. Our Constitution is color-blind, and neither

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knows nor tolerates classes among citizens. In respect of civil rights, all citizens are equal before the law. The humblest is the peer of the most powerful.¹

With Harlan's dissent ringing in the ears of both white and black, the spirit behind these words would become the inspiration for the leaders of America's black communities, as they embarked upon an epic struggle to attain the equality that resides at the heart of the American Dream.

Understanding that the battle had to first be won in the legal sphere, black leaders set out to organize the black community into a forceful and active group of reformers. With the rise in the 1920's, '30's, and '40's of groups such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Christian Leadership Conference, and the Southern Regional Council, as well as many other local and state level organizations, black citizens, for the first time in American history, were provided with the opportunity to take an active role in the mobilization of the black community towards social justice.² These organizations gave blacks a forum with which to voice their opinions and problems. These groups, therefore, not only made the country aware of the problems facing African-Americans, they also allowed for a vocalization of these problems within the black community, helping to make the black populace more aware of its own problems and more capable of dealing with them.

However, equality would come neither quickly nor easily, as white segregationists throughout the American Southland fervently fought to hold on to what they believed was their "Southern Heritage." This fear of integration was rooted in a long-standing view that blacks were an inferior and mongrelized race. As one Louisiana father professed during the 1950's, "What the Negro is and the way he lives is the cause of his being segregated. I have no desire to ever subject myself or my family to their social companionship."³ This sentiment was not only present within the masses, making its presence known in Southern politics as well, as politicians throughout the South subscribed to these values, often times in an attempt to gain popularity within the white community. A white politician who supported segregation was assured at least the attention and respect of the white community. Allen J. Ellender, a native of Louisiana and a United States Senator from that state for thirty-six years, expressed his views on the topic clearly and without contradiction with the statement, "The Negro is inferior to the white man."⁴ In 1963, George Wallace, a four-time governor of Alabama, during his first gubernatorial inauguration address, paid homage to the "...Heart of the Great Anglo-Saxon Southland," while at the same time vowing to protect "...segregation forever."⁵ However, the issue went much deeper than a mere feeling of white

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superiority. The core fear of white parents throughout the desegregation era was the mixing of the races, or to put it simply, black boys with white girls. As one historian noted, "Sex stewed at the center of the white man's terror and rage, joined to a blind, furious racial ignorance, and sexual insecurity."⁶ With this observation we come to the core of the white man's fears concerning integration. The idea of the southern female as being a bastion of southern tradition, beauty, righteousness, and purity caused the fear of southern segregationists to manifest itself in their need to protect what they perceived as the purity of their children, and thus their race. For this reason we see many of the greatest battles over integration, both symbolic and concrete, taking place over the desegregation of higher education in the South. For many southern whites the university became the focal point for their hopes and efforts in keeping their "Southern Heritage" intact.

Black leaders also saw the university as having significant importance for the furtherance of their cause. Education provided a venue for civil rights advocates to prove that the "separate but equal" doctrine was un-Constitutional and detrimental to the progress and growth of the black community. Because of the abstract nature of education it was easier to prove inequalities within a separate educational system than within other social institutions. Higher education became the doorway for the gradual attack on segregation because admission to a university or college is supposed to be based upon academic merit, and not racial preference. Discrimination by race is supposed to be protected against by the Fourteenth Amendments "Equal Protection Clause," however, segregationists had been able to circumvent this right through a web of legal and political oppression, the foundation of which was the *Plessy* decision.

Most people see the Supreme Court decision of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) as the beginning of the desegregation era in the South. In the *Brown* decision, the Supreme Court ruled, by a unanimous vote, that because of the inherent inequalities of separate schools, the doctrine of "separate but equal" was un-Constitutional in the area of education.⁷ However, the effort to desegregate Southern higher education began decades before the *Brown* case ever graced the Supreme Court docket. The first major legal victory for blacks in the Supreme Court came in the form of *Guinn v. United States* (1915). In this case the Court struck down Oklahoma's "grandfather clause," ruling that the law was unconstitutional.⁸ Then, in 1935, the NAACP declared war on the "separate but equal" doctrine. In June of that year the group brought the case of *Donald G. Murray v. Maryland* (1935) to the Maryland Circuit Court of Appeals.⁹ Donald Murray contested his denial of admission to the University of Maryland Law School, having been denied admission because he was black. Maryland had not

¹ *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 (1896), Number 210. Found at <http://laws.findlaw.com/us/163/537.html>

² Wiggins, *The Desegregation Era in Higher Education*, McCutchan Publishing, CA, 1966, pp 413

³ Adam Fairclough, *Race and Democracy: The Civil Rights Struggle in LA, 1915-1972*, University of GA Press, Athens and London, 1995, p169

⁴ *Ibid*, p168

⁵ *The 1963 Inaugural Address of Governor George C. Wallace*, January 14, 1963, Montgomery, Alabama

⁶ Adam Fairclough, *Race and Democracy: The Civil Rights Struggle in LA, 1915-1972*, University of GA press, Athens and London, 1995, p169

⁷ *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954), Number 1. Found at <http://laws.findlaw.com/us/305/377.html>

⁸ *American Legal History*, Second Edition. Ed. Kermit Hall, William Wiecek, and Paul Finkelman. Oxford University Press, New York, NY, 1996, p446

⁹ Bullock, *A History of Negro Education in the South*, Harvard Univ. Press, Cambridge, MA, 1967, p 227-228

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established a law school for Negroes; therefore the Maryland Court issued a writ of mandamus requiring Murray's admission. This case was the first of a series of strategically planned legal assaults on segregation in the educational system.

The attack continued in 1938, when the Supreme Court heard a case involving the University of Missouri. Lloyd Gaines, a Missouri native, had been denied admission to the University of Missouri Law School solely because of his race. However, as was common practice during this time, the state offered to pay for his education at a school in another state, a school that accepted Negroes. Gaines, however, rejected this offer, ascertaining that as a legal citizen of the state of Missouri he had a right to attend the University of Missouri. The Court ruled in favor of Gaines, requiring Gaines' admission because the state did not provide a black institution equal to the Missouri Law School.¹⁰ However, Gaines never attended the university. After the order came down Gaines subsequently disappeared and was never heard from.¹¹ Gaines' disappearance is just one example of the violence that whites employed to battle civil rights within their communities.¹² Although the Gaines decision did not require integrated schools, the case was a major stepping-stone for the legal phase of the cause. It was the first time that the Supreme Court explicitly required that a state provide "equal" facilities as well as "separate" ones.

The next major victory in the legal battle for school integration came in 1948 in the form of *Sipuel v. Board of Regents* (1948). In this case, the University of Oklahoma Law School denied admission to Ada Sipuel because she was black. Using the *Gaines* case as precedent, the court ruled that Sipuel was entitled to the same legal education as any other applicant.¹³ Two years later the Court handed down two major decisions that would further the integration movement, *McLaurin v. Oklahoma Board of Regents* (1950) and *Sweatt v. Painter* (1950). In the *Sweatt* decision, the University of Texas Law School had rejected Herman Sweatt's application for admission based on the fact that he was black. The state court recognized that this policy denied equal protection. However, the court delayed proceedings of the case in order for the state to put into place what could be referred to as "equal" facilities. Upon appeal to the Supreme Court, they ruled that because of the vast superiority of the University of Texas Law School, the two institutions were not equal, thus ordering Sweatt's admission.¹⁴ This case brought

a new dynamic into the equation, for in it the Court recognized the differences in "separate" facilities, laying the groundwork for the *Brown* decision four years later. In the *McLaurin* case, the Court heard a matter in which an African American had been admitted to the University of Oklahoma Graduate School of Education. However, upon entering the school, the plaintiff, George McLaurin, had been set apart from the other students in classrooms by means of barricades, and in some instances was forced to sit outside of the classroom and listen to lectures through an open door. The state defended their actions by saying that they had not denied McLaurin any of the facilities available to other students and that he was not placed at a disadvantage by his segregation within the university. However, the court did not agree, saying that the segregation disabled McLaurin from taking part in discussions and exchanging views with other students, a key part of any graduate education. In its decision the Court went on to espouse the following:

Our society grows increasingly complex, and our need for trained leaders increases correspondingly. Appellants [McLaurin] case represents, perhaps, the epitome of that need, for he is attempting to obtain an advanced degree in education, to become, by definition, a leader and trainer of others. Those who will come under his guidance and influence must be directly affected by the education he receives. Their own education and development will necessarily suffer to the extent that his training is unequal to that of his classmates. *Self-imposed restrictions which produce such inequities cannot be sustained.*¹⁵

Even with this groundbreaking statement, the court refused to directly address the *Plessy* decision, which was at the heart of the matter. However, the NAACP would not have to wait long, as the matter would be thoroughly addressed in *Brown v. Board*.

Beginning in 1938 with the *Murray* case, the NAACP Legal Defense Fund had been waging a legal battle with the "separate but equal" doctrine espoused by the *Plessy* decision of 1896. *Sweatt* and *McLaurin* proved that they were winning. Inspired by these early victories and under the leadership of future Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, the NAACP decided to challenge the "separate but equal" doctrine directly. In December of 1952, Marshall and his colleagues brought the *Brown* case before the Supreme Court. The case was reargued in December of 1953, with the decision being handed down in May of '54. The case was actually an amalgamation of cases brought together by the Legal Defense Fund in a class action suit. This meant that the case was not only representative of the plaintiffs bringing the litigation, but that they represented an

¹⁰ Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada, Registrar of the University of Missouri, Et Al., 305 U.S. 337, Number 57. Found at <http://laws.findlaw.com/us/305/337.html>

¹¹ "A Legal History of Desegregation in Higher Education," The Journal of Negro History, Volume 63, Issue 3, Summer 1994, p 406-420

¹² Other examples of this brutality include the murder of Emmitt Till, the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., and the firebombing of black churches in Birmingham and Montgomery, ALA, as well as the countless other black individuals, families, and communities terrorized by militant racists throughout the South.

¹³ *Sipuel v. Board of Regents of University of Oklahoma*, 332 U.S. 631 (1948), Number 369. Found at <http://laws.findlaw.com/us/332/631.html>

¹⁴ *Sweatt v. Painter*, 339 U.S. 629 (1950), Number 44. Found at <http://laws.findlaw.com/us/339/629.html>

¹⁵ *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education et al.*, 339 U.S. 637 (1950), Number 34. Found at <http://laws.findlaw.com/us/339/637.html>(emphasis added)

entire group of people, in this case black school children and students throughout the jurisdiction of the United States, who were also being denied their rights. The case included school-age children from Topeka, Kansas, Delaware, South Carolina, and Virginia, as well as a companion case, *Bolling v. Sharpe* (1954), which, however, was litigated in the District of Columbia under the Fifth Amendment's "liberty clause." Nevertheless, *Brown* was the one that made headlines, for it ended the age of segregation in American history as far as the law was concerned. With a rare unanimous decision, and Chief Justice Earl Warren providing the majority opinion, the High Court found the doctrine of "separate but equal" in the schools to be un-Constitutional under the "Equal Protection Clause" of the Fourteenth Amendment. In his opinion, Warren would say that the very nature of education denied the ability of the state to provide "equal" educational opportunities to black students.¹⁶ The court's decision was largely affected by data gathered by social scientists and psychologists that showed segregation to be detrimental to Negro children. The ruling, although the court prescribed no course of implementation, effectively overturned the *Plessy* decision of a half a century before. However, with the legal battle won, desegregationists quickly found that white segregationist leaders would stop at nothing to protect their so called "Southern Heritage."

With the Supreme Court's orders resonating in their ears and fear ringing in their hearts, the ultra segregationists of the Deep South would implement a plan of counterattack that became known as "massive resistance," a term that would become the battle cry of many white Southern politicians of the civil rights age. The massive resistance movement was aided by a southern court system that would not flinch at supporting their agenda, as well as the passage of segregation friendly legislation aimed at hindering any progress of civil rights in the South. With the rise of ultra segregationist groups such as the Citizens Council and the re-emergence of the often violent Ku Klux Klan, southern whites made it clear that they would not easily relinquish their control of Southern society. White politicians in the South pledged to fight desegregation tooth and nail, and some did just that. In 1953, sensing the fall of segregation in the courts, Alabama State Senator Sam Englehardt introduced a bill to the state legislature providing for the "establishment, operation, financing, and regulation of free private schools."¹⁷ In August of 1955, Governor Marvin Griffin of Georgia would travel to Alabama to praise the state for its fierce stand against integration and its pledge to resist the *Brown* decision.¹⁸ In the early 1960's, when James Meredith was seeking admission to the University of Mississippi, Mississippi Governor Ross Barnett pledged his unwavering support to "keep Ole Miss white."¹⁹ Then there was Governor George Wallace's defiant

¹⁶ *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954), Number 1. Found at <http://laws.findlaw.com/us/347/483.html>

¹⁷ *The Journal of Negro Education*, Volume 27, Issue 3, "Some Problems of Desegregation of Higher Education in the 'Hard Core' States", Summer, 1958, p352-372

¹⁸ *ibid*, p352

¹⁹ *The Journal of Negro Education*, Volume 35, Issue 4, "The Role of Gubernatorial Leadership in Desegregation in Higher Education", Autumn, 1966, 439-444

stand against Vivian Malone and the federal government at the schoolhouse door of the University of Alabama in 1963. The list of politicians and state officials in the Deep South who willingly and adamantly defied the federal government goes on and on. These politicians realized that in order to be successful in Southern politics, a pro-segregation stance was essential.

Indeed, race was the central issue confronting Southern politicians during the civil rights era. Race baiting was all too common on the campaign trail and during public speeches. However, the catalyst for these political segregationists and southern demagogues lay in the mass of southern whites to whom segregation was the last way to insure the "purity" of their culture.²⁰ This attitude can be best demonstrated by the rise to power in the Deep South of the Citizens Council. The Citizens' Council was a group organized to oppose and prevent segregation within the South, and although it was less radical than its counterpart the Ku Klux Klan, the group and its leaders were more influential than the KKK in furthering the "massive resistance" movement. Made up mostly of businessmen within local communities, the Citizens Council pursued their goals through legislation, legal proceedings, and economic reprisals, as well as outright defiance. By 1956, the Citizens Council had a strong following in much of the South. In New Orleans, LA, a city traditionally known for its tolerance for diversity, the Council had over twenty-five thousand members.²¹ The Council in Louisiana used its influence with politicians to pass a series of laws designed to specifically circumvent *Brown*. One of these laws restricted state funds to only segregated public schools. Another allowed school boards to assign students on an individual basis, making it easier to create segregated classrooms.²² In Georgia, the Citizen's Council was influential in getting legislation passed that made it a "...felony for any school official of the state, municipality, or county systems to spend tax money for public schools..." in which races were mixed.²³ Another provision of this law said that any part of the University of Georgia school system to admit a Negro would lose its operating budget.²⁴ In Louisiana, segregationists established the Joint Committee to Maintain Segregation, which took on the task of "drafting obstructionist laws and devising a broad strategy to forestall integration."²⁵ In July 1955, the Louisiana state legislature approved an appropriation to help pay for the legal defense of segregation and any segregation friendly legislation.²⁶ By using the "good government" law in Louisiana, the Citizens Council was able to disenfranchise a

²⁰ Adam Fairclough, *Race and Democracy: The Civil Rights Struggle in LA, 1915-1972*, University of GA press, Athens and London, 1995, p186

²¹ This total included over half of the Council's membership for the entire state of Louisiana, Adam Fairclough, *Race and Democracy: The Civil Rights Struggle in LA, 1915-1972*, University of GA press, Athens and London, 1995, p204.

²² *ibid*, p169

²³ "The Journal of Negro Education", Volume 27, Issue 3, "Some Problems of Desegregation of Higher Education in the 'Hard Core' States", Summer, 1958, p352-372

²⁴ *ibid*, p360

²⁵ Adam Fairclough, *Race and Democracy: The Civil Rights Struggle in LA, 1915-1972*, University of GA press, Athens and London, 1995, p170

²⁶ *ibid*, p194

number of southern blacks. The law provided for the challenge by two legally registered voters of a voter believed to be "illegally registered." In order to contest this claim the challenged voter was required to attain an affidavit containing signatures of three legally registered voters. If they failed to do this within ten days the challenged voter would be stricken from the registrar. With this tactic, segregationists within Louisiana were able to disenfranchise over ten thousand black citizens.²⁷ The standoff between segregationists and desegregationists would last for several decades in the Deep South. However, white southerners saw the writing on the wall, and segregation was, for the most part, coming to a close in the higher education system by the end of the 1960's.

Although several of the hard core states such as Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, and South Carolina resisted adamantly to integration, by 1966 most of the institutions of higher learning in the Deep South had been integrated. By 1964, desegregation had been fully achieved in the former Border States.²⁸ Southeastern Louisiana College, in Hammond LA, integrated without trouble in 1955.²⁹ By '64, seventy-two percent of public colleges and universities had been desegregated in the South, with that number falling to fifty-one percent with regard to church-affiliated institutions, and only forty-two percent within private colleges.³⁰ After the *Civil Rights Act of 1964*, those numbers climbed substantially. Section 601 of this act called for complete equality within federally funded colleges and universities, stating that:

No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.³¹

Specifically aimed at school integration, this section of the act brought about a much more rapid progression of integration within the South. By 1966, all public universities in the South, except for one, had been integrated, with sixty-seven such institutions integrating during that span.³² The act also helped to integrate private schools, by virtue of its "Assurance of Compliance" provision. This provision provided that any private school that voluntarily integrated would gain some federal funding, funding that would be withheld if the school did not integrate.³³ By virtue of its no-nonsense legislation, the *Civil Rights Act* was instrumental in the climbing number of black students being admitted to traditionally white universities and colleges in the South during the 1960s. However, to truly

understand the situation, one must look at the total number of black students in these schools and their relative proportions to the black population of that area. By 1966, while all but one of the South's public institutions of higher education were integrated, fewer than two percent of the students in traditionally white schools within the South were black, compared to a black population numbering around ten percent.³⁴ When considering these numbers, it is relatively easy to ascertain that the majority of segregation within the Deep South was a "token" gesture, in order to be in compliance with the law. Because of this, segregation within the South was a gradual process, and while decisions such as *Brown* and legislation such as the *Civil Rights Act* helped, they could not overcome the innate racial animosity and fear that existed between the two cultures.

When exploring the evolution of university integration within the South it is curious to look at the actions of the private and church-affiliated universities. While many people would expect religious institutions to take the lead in such a noble cause, quite the opposite is true. As was noted earlier, while prior to *Brown* the number of integrated public and private schools was relatively equal, by 1964 only fifty-one percent of church connected institutions were integrated, compared with seventy-two percent of public colleges and universities. Since private universities, religious affiliates included, do not gain their funding from state and federal funds, they were not required to integrate under *Brown*. Likewise, other than the "Assurance of Compliance" provision, which was voluntary, the *Civil Rights Act of 1964* did not affect them directly. The fact was that many religious schools did not want to risk losing their white students if they were to integrate. Because education is a keystone of most religious ideologies and agendas, they did not feel compelled to put their livelihood on the line for the cause of integration. This can be demonstrated by the fact that at Loyola University, New Orleans, while admitting two black graduate students in 1951, and two more to the Law School in 1952, no black student graced the undergraduate program until 1962, the same year that Ole Miss was integrated.³⁵ And what's more, when they did finally integrate, as Father Joseph H. Fitcher, a leading civil rights voice in New Orleans, noted, "The goodwill and cooperation of the administration and faculty... were not forthcoming."³⁶ In the cities high schools, Archbishop Rummel of New Orleans pledged to desegregate the private schools in his diocese by 1956; however, due to pressure from groups such as the Citizen's Council and segregationist politicians, Rummel did not follow through with this promise until 1962, two years after the New Orleans public schools integrated.³⁷ Although he wanted to act, Rummel yielded to the pressure of the masses, thus setting an example of procrastination and delay rather than leading the way. Judging by these actions, or rather inactions,

²⁷ *ibid*, p197

²⁸ Wiggins, *The Desegregation Era in Higher Education*, McCutchan Publishing, CA, 1966, p17

²⁹ Adam Fairclough, *Race and Democracy: The Civil Rights Struggle in LA, 1915-1972*, University of GA press, Athens and London, 1995, p 166

³⁰ Wiggins, *The Desegregation Era in Higher Education*, McCutchan Publishing, CA, 1966

³¹ *Civil Rights Act of 1964*, Title VI, Section 601

³² Wiggins, *The Desegregation Era in Higher Education*, McCutchan Publishing, CA, 1966, pp 18-20

³³ *ibid*, pp20-21

³⁴ Wiggins, *The Desegregation Era in Higher Education*, McCutchan Publishing, CA, 1966, p24

³⁵ Adam Fairclough, *Race and Democracy: The Civil Rights Struggle in LA, 1915-1972*, University of GA press, Athens and London, 1995, pp 171-174

³⁶ *ibid*, p173

³⁷ Adam Fairclough, *Race and Democracy: The Civil Rights Struggle in LA, 1915-1972*, University of GA press, Athens and London, 1995, p172

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it is safe to say that Church leaders, at least in Louisiana, dropped the ball on integration.

While the majority of Southern institutions integrated peacefully, there were a few schools that took desegregation to the breaking point, and in one case, beyond. The states of Mississippi and Alabama, both of which have a long history as some of the most racially heated areas of the South, provided the setting for two of the most defiant and violent stands against integration throughout the desegregation era in southern higher education. In both of these instances the students attempting to desegregate the two schools, James Meredith at Ole Miss, in Oxford Mississippi, and Autherine Lucy, followed by Vivian Malone, at the University of Alabama, in Montgomery, found themselves at the heart of a groundswell of popular discontent and racial animosity; discontent that would subsequently boil over into violent rioting, and, in the case of Ole Miss, an all out insurrection. The first attempt to integrate one of these schools occurred in the mid-1950s at the University of Alabama. Early in that decade the Alabama branch of the NAACP was searching for someone to test segregation at the university. Through a sequence of events involving circumstance, chance, and perseverance, the paths of Autherine Lucy and Pollie Ann Meyers, who had met and become friends at Miles Memorial College, an all black school in Birmingham, crossed with the NAACP in their search for candidates. Lucy and Meyers were both bright, self-motivated women, who, although Meyers was the more active of the two, had a keen sense of awareness regarding their responsibilities as African Americans during this volatile period. When Lucy and Meyers first expressed interest in the University of Alabama, officials at the school did not know that they were black. Therefore, the school sent both of them an application, arranging for a visit to the campus and a meeting with Ralph Adams, the university's Dean of Administrations, whose policy on black students was simply that "the University of Alabama does not admit Negroes."³⁸ However, upon discovering that both Meyers and Lucy were black, the school and its administration began to vehemently back-pedal. However, they did allow both Meyers and Lucy to apply for admission. Upon receipt of their applications, the schools Board of Trustees, a group that would control the schools policies towards integration throughout the period, denied admission to Pollie Meyers on the grounds that she had a child out of wedlock, which was university policy at the time. The Board had hoped that without Meyers, Lucy would be more apt to not follow through with her plans. However, Autherine Lucy would not be so easily shaken. Obtaining a court order, she was admitted to the school on January 31, 1956. However, the following day, while registering for class, Lucy was denied registration to the schools dormitories. Arthur Shores, Lucy's attorney, contacted the judge who had ordered her admission to the school, who subsequently called the university's administration, after which the university acquiesced. Two days later, on February 3, Lucy became the first black student to attend class at the University of Alabama.³⁹ Unfortunately, trouble was brewing

underneath what seemed a relatively easy transition. That night a crowd formed on the university campus and things soon turned ugly. Spurned on by cries of "Keep 'Bama White" and renditions of "Dixie," the crowd surged down University Boulevard, carrying out acts of vandalism along the way.⁴⁰ One student, Leonard Wilson, a conservative pro-segregation sophomore, served as the crowd's makeshift leader. Wilson, who had established himself in student politics as an outspoken segregationist, convinced the crowd to meet again the following night, Saturday, February 4. As promised, a crowd of two thousand protesters gathered, described by one witness as a "sea of white rage."⁴¹ After burning a cross on campus, they proceeded to once again march down University Boulevard, burning NAACP literature, waving confederate flags, and screaming racial epithets as they went.⁴² Some of the protesters were not students. It is believed that some KKK members were involved; however, the majority of the protesters were otherwise even minded young people swept away by the electrifying senselessness and attraction of the mob. The protest had such an impact on the universities psyche that two days later, an angry mass of students converged on the building holding Lucy's first class. Upon arriving to campus, Lucy had not sensed any danger, so she decided to go to class. What unfolded over the next several hours would prove to be the most harrowing experience of her life.

After leaving her first class, the crowd, which now numbered more than five hundred and was becoming increasingly vocal and aggressive, chased her to her next class. Aided by school officials and a few police officers, she was able to make it safely inside the building. However, because the small protection force assembled for Lucy's safety was not strong enough to disperse a mob of such magnitude, Lucy, along with her fellow students, remained trapped inside the classroom for several hours, as the mob called for a lynching and threw rocks and sticks at the classroom windows. During a break in the crowd's attention, Lucy was rushed out of the building and into a patrol car, but not before being noticed. As the crowd quickly moved in, the driver sped away, just seconds before being reached by the angry mob. Lucy recalled hearing the resonating sound of the mob's curses as the car sped away to safety, and only moments after the rear window of her getaway car had been shattered by rocks and debris hurled by rioters.⁴³ Throughout the entire ordeal, Lucy would later relate to a family member, she prayed "for courage to accept the fact that I might lose my life there."⁴⁴ The following day the university suspended Lucy from school, saying that it was in the interest of her safety, as well as the safety of the other students.⁴⁵ Arthur Shores threatened to take the case back to court if she was not reinstated. The

⁴⁰ Clark, *The Schoolhouse Door*, Oxford Press, NY, 1993, Pp 60-72

⁴¹ *Ibid*, p 73

⁴² "Alabama U. Rally Protests a Negro," *New York Times*, February 5, 1956, P 60

⁴³ Peter Kihss, "Negro Coed Is Suspended to Curb Alabama Clashes," *New York Times*, February 7, 1956, P 1

⁴⁴ Clark, *The Schoolhouse Door*, Oxford Press, NY, 1993, P 73

⁴⁵ Peter Kihss, "Negro Coed Is Suspended to Curb Alabama Clashes," *New York Times*, February 7, 1956, P 1

³⁸ Clark, *The Schoolhouse Door*, Oxford Press, NY, 1993, p12

³⁹ *ibid*, pp 60-65

university refused, and litigation resumed. Throughout the subsequent proceedings, the court was sympathetic to the university's line of reasoning for Lucy's suspension. However, a tactical error provided the court and the university with the room they needed to expel Lucy. Lucy's attorneys, whose ranks now boasted Constance Baker Motley and Thurgood Marshall from the NAACP's Legal Defense Fund, filed their suit with the claim that the university's officials had instigated the riot in an attempt to get Lucy to leave the school. This claim, although Marshall would withdraw it later, would come back to haunt them in the near future. In a back room deal between the court and the university's Board of Trustees, the court agreed to order re-admittance, with the knowledge that the board would subsequently expel Lucy for making false and malicious accusations against the school and its officials.⁴⁶ The plan would prove to be foolproof, and on February 29 the court ordered Lucy's re-admittance.⁴⁷ That same evening the board voted unanimously to expel Lucy on the aforementioned grounds.

The NAACP decided not to challenge the expulsion, partly because Lucy did not want to go back, and partly because they knew that any more action would only end in more violence. However, the University of Alabama, although technically integrated, remained an all white institution until the arrival of Vivian Malone on June 11, 1963. On that day, Malone, armed with a federally mandated court order, and accompanied by Assistant Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach, came face to face with the racial hatred of the South in the form of Alabama Governor George Wallace. In an attempt to show his resolve in upholding Southern segregation, Wallace tried to physically bar Malone's entrance into the university's admissions building. This act would become known as the "stand in the schoolhouse door," galvanizing the Alabama Governor as the leader of the anti-civil rights movement. Although Wallace knew that he would not succeed, his stand was a symbol of the Southern determination to assert its sovereignty and throw off the yoke of what he called "...an omnipotent Federal Government."⁴⁸ Wallace attempted to base his defiant actions on the assertion that the federal government had no right to force state run institutions to desegregate. With this as his claim, he invoked the theory of interposition, which held that a state could interpose itself between the Federal Government's enforcement of a law in cases that it deemed as unconstitutional. This premise is based on the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution, which Wallace cited in his "Schoolhouse Door Speech," and states that, "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people." Wallace held that the University of Alabama, by virtue of the fact that it was a state run school, was under the jurisdiction of these "reserved powers." However, the Federal Government thought otherwise and their victory in the Montgomery showdown proved once again that interposition is a slippery slope

on which to stand. Wallace's symbolic barring of the schoolhouse door represented the last gasp of segregations furious defiance at the University of Alabama. In the end, Wallace would be championed by the far right as a hero to the cause of massive resistance. However, after his confrontation with Malone and the Federal Government, the University of Alabama went back to life the way it was before integration, with the exception of one stark and contrasting difference, now there were black faces in the crowd.

Although harrowing, as well as appalling, the protests, defiance, and rioting at the University of Alabama were mild when compared to what took place at the University of Mississippi in the fall of 1962. Mississippi has the sad reputation of being perhaps the deepest seat of racial prejudice and hatred in the Union. The national attention brought to Mississippi surrounding such atrocities as the Emmitt Till murder have given Mississippi the ominous reputation of the Deep South's most hate filled state. As one civil rights activist during the 1960's proclaimed, in Mississippi "...you could have cut the hatred with a knife."⁴⁹ As a native of Mississippi, James Meredith learned about this hatred first hand as he grew up in the small rural town of Kosciusko.⁵⁰ Meredith, who would become one of the first African-Americans to serve in the United States Armed Forces, was a strong-minded and even stronger-willed individual. Unsatisfied with compromise, and never willing to accept defeat, Meredith espoused his beliefs on citizenship when he proclaimed, "I don't believe in 'improvement' in the area of human dignity. Either an individual has all the human rights or he does not. If a person in Mississippi has the right to kick me ten times a day, it is no benefit that next week he kicks me only five times. Either he kicks me with impunity or he does not."⁵¹ Meredith's commitment to not accepting half-measures and compromises, combined with his pride in being a black American and Mississippi son, led him to tackle the integration of Ole Miss with a fervent and able tenacity. With the backing of the Federal Government, Meredith's attempt to integrate his native states most sacred institution was a success. However, all success stories have their price.

Most political scientists, as well historians, agree that resolute leadership is often times key in determining public reaction.⁵² In the case of Mississippi, that leadership took the form of Governor Ross Barnett. Barnett, an adamant segregationist, was described by *Time* magazine as "as bitter a racist as inhabits the nation."⁵³ Barnett's views on race can be summed up in one word - absolute. Pledging himself to the fight against desegregation, Barnett told one group of supporters, "No school will be integrated in Mississippi while I am your governor... every public official, including myself, should be prepared to make the choice tonight whether he is willing to go to jail..."⁵⁴ Barnett's hatred for the

⁴⁹ William Doyle, *An American Insurrection*, Anchor Publishing, 1999, p 87

⁵⁰ *ibid*, p 19

⁵¹ William Doyle, *An American Insurrection*, Anchor Publishing, 1999, p 299

⁵² *The Journal of Negro Education*, Volume 35, Issue 4, "The Role of Gubernatorial Leadership in Desegregation in Higher Education", Autumn, 1966, p 439-444

⁵³ William Doyle, *An American Insurrection*, Anchor Publishing, 1999, p 50

⁴⁶ Clark, *The Schoolhouse Door*, Oxford Press, NY, 1993, p 102

⁴⁷ *Ibid*

⁴⁸ Claude Sitton, "Governor Wallace Vows to Defy Injunction and Block Negroes," *New York Times*, June 2, 1963, P1

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“mongrel race,” as he virulently called blacks, was a representation of the feelings of the majority of Mississippi whites. A tentative survey of white Mississippians in late September of 1962, found that over two-thirds of those polled agreed with Governor Barnett’s stand against federally mandated integration, and that the majority of the remaining third agreed with segregation but thought it wrong to defy the federal government.⁵⁵ Unsurprisingly, Barnett did little to make the ordered integration of Ole Miss go smoothly. Like countless other southern politicians, Barnett was goaded along by the swell popular support for segregation that was present throughout the South during the civil rights era. By voicing his support for this movement, Barnett was propelled into the Mississippi spotlight as a champion of massive resistance. During a halftime speech at the Ole Miss homecoming football game in the fall of 1962, with his right arm raised and fist clenched, as if to symbolize his resolution, the crowd screaming their wild approval, Barnett presented a striking resemblance to a swastika toting Adolph Hitler. However, Barnett would not amass the power that Hitler did, and his popularity would soon come to an end. Unable, or maybe rather unwilling, to put a stop to the events quickly spinning out of control in Oxford, Barnett would soon regret his actions.

After a court order requiring the admission of James Meredith to the university, Barnett would conspire with university officials, state police, and his cabinet members to prevent Meredith’s registration with the university. While doing all that he could to stop Meredith in Oxford, he would play a dangerous game of cat and mouse with President Kennedy and Attorney General Bobby Kennedy, vacillating over the phone throughout more than twenty conversations on how to handle the situation.⁵⁶ Kennedy, who up until that time had wavered on the civil rights issue, had no choice but to send federal marshals to Ole Miss in order to forcibly register Meredith with the university. On October 1, with the full blessing of the federal government and a bewildered University of Mississippi administrator looking on, James Meredith registered for classes at the University of Mississippi. However, any jubilation that Meredith or his supporters fostered at that moment had already been washed away by the sea of violence that had engulfed the Ole Miss campus on the preceding night.

Meredith had been placed on campus the night before, September 30, by federal marshals with the intent of registering him the next day. However, as he waited, a storm was brewing not far away on the Ole Miss campus, a storm of which he was the target. When students returned from the weekend they found the campus Lyceum surrounded by tear-gas touting federal marshals. Already a hostile situation, due to the antics of Governor Barnett, the campus quickly became the focal point for thousands of people swarming in from across the South to lend a hand to the segregationist cause. These people included militant segregationists, such as former United States Army General Edwin Walker, who had been present

⁵⁵ “Southern Whites Back Governor Barnett’s Stand But Think He Will Lose,” *Wall Street Journal*, September, 28, 1962, P 14

⁵⁶ Wiggins, *The Desegregation Era in Higher Education*, McCutchan Publishing, CA, 1966, p 34

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in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1957 with orders from then President Dwight D. Eisenhower to protect the “Little Rock Nine” as they integrated the public schools of Arkansas.⁵⁷ Always an adamant racist, after leaving the Army, Walker had become a darling of the far right. With people such as this, many of them armed, pouring onto the campus, the situation quickly deteriorated into an all out battle. Rioters, throwing everything from rocks to Molotov cocktails at the marshals, forced Nicholas Katzenback, assistant attorney general under Bobby Kennedy, to allow the marshals to fire back with rounds of tear-gas. The battle raged on throughout the night, as President Kennedy pleaded with an indecisive Barnett to try and stop the fighting. By the time Kennedy was able to get U.S. troops into Oxford, two people, Ray Gunter, an Oxford native, and Paul Giuard, a French journalist, had been killed. Countless others, from federal marshals, to students, to civilians, had been wounded. The battle spread into the city of Oxford, where unsuspecting black citizens on their way to work were harassed and attacked by white rioters. By the time the riot was subdued Meredith had been successfully registered at the University of Mississippi; however, the price had been great. Two people had lost their lives, and many others had been injured. The dark underbelly of Southern racism had been laid bare for the rest of the world to see.

The American South had once again made an attempt to defy the federal government and assert its sovereignty. The Paris newspaper *L’Aurore* called the “James Meredith story more than saddening,” going on to say, “Hitler...has not cured the world of racism. There are...in a so-called model civilization, still people who distinguish between their kind according to the color of their skin.”⁵⁸ *Time* magazine referred to the insurrection at Ole Miss as “The gravest conflict between state and federal authority since the Civil War.” Others have called it the last battle of the Civil War, the last gasp of a society doomed to defeat. However, the fight for equality in Southern universities represents more than the defeat of racism and sectionalism. While it is true that civil rights leaders targeted education because it was easier to prove inequalities within a separate educational system, they also understood that education is the greatest weapon for fighting intolerance and ignorance. Education is the key to unlocking the true potential of the human mind and spirit for knowledge, understanding, and compassion, and the civil rights leaders knew this. Only through knowledge and understanding can a person become enlightened and truly see the potential of all humanity. Education in America was changing during the 1960’s, and with it so was the world.

On the same day that Governor Wallace made his symbolic stand at the University of Alabama, a Buddhist monk in Saigon set himself ablaze in protest of American imperialism.⁵⁹ During the previous week, Iranian fundamentalists erupted in the streets of Teheran and throughout Iran, killing eighty-six people and wounding some two hundred more in a violent protest against social and civil

⁵⁷ Ibid, Introduction

⁵⁸ “Crisis in Mississippi Big News Abroad,” United Press International, *New York Times*, September 29, 1962, P 1

⁵⁹ David Halberstam, “Diem Asks Peace In Religious Crisis,” *New York Times*, June 12, 1963, P 3

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reforms.⁶⁰ President Nixon would soon visit the People's Republic of China, marking the first time that an American president would visit Communist China, reflecting the conviction that lasting international peace can only be achieved through leadership. Following with the political contradictions of the time, Nixon had ordered the military invasions of Cambodia and Laos during the previous two years. The landscape of the world was changing, and so was America. George Wallace was changing the way American politics worked, giving voice to an angry group of citizens who saw the federal government more and more as a tyrannical power. The civil rights movement was gaining steam, giving blacks a powerful voice in American society for the first time in the countries' history. Betty Friedan's *Feminine Mystique* was changing the ways in which America viewed women, as well as the ways in which American women viewed themselves. The fast food industry, which within the century would come to define American culture, was taking root in southern California, as the McDonald brothers founded their first restaurant, helping to change the way Americans ate. The winds of social change were blowing throughout the world, and although it took more time than most would have liked, and less than some would have expected, the desegregation of the Southern university system signaled a change in the way Southern Americans viewed the world. The South would never be the same, equality was inevitable, and higher education was just a stepping-stone, not only to a better education, but also to a better way of life and the opportunity for all Americans to realize the meaning behind the words "...all men are created equal."

Women and Vatican II: A Legacy to be Remembered

by: Erin Hardy

Rosemary Goldie, one of the 23 women invited to the Vatican II council, was allowed to participate in a conciliar commission on the church in the modern world. A priest had just composed a flowery sentence on the subject of women and asked Rosemary and the other women what they thought. Rosemary replied: "You can omit all those gratuitous flowery adjectives, the pedestals, the incense, from your sentence. All women ask for is that they be recognized as the full human persons that they are, and treated accordingly."¹ Goldie's retort captures the tone of the women auditors of Vatican II, who embraced the opportunity to voice themselves for the first time in the church, and who adopted a mission to assert women's equality to a patriarchal council of male clergy. Vatican II, 1962-1965, was the first council in the history of the church to invite women, and it was about time. Women's status before Vatican II, their experience at the council, and reforms affecting women are all important in the understanding of the broad topic of women and the second Vatican Council. Vatican II implemented many beneficial reforms to both religious and secular women and symbolized a new age in the church, since it had never before included women in its policy-making. However, its legacy is in danger of burning out, as the church once again has closed its doors to progressive reform for women.

John XXIII called the council in 1962. He called it an *aggiramento*, translating loosely from Italian into "letting in a breath of fresh air," or "an updating." Often considered liberal-minded, he wanted the church to better suit the needs of the modern world. He called bishops from all over the world to the council to discuss issues of the church and plans for reform. Held at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, Vatican II attracted much international attention. John XXII, however, died before the first session ended. Paul VI, his successor and former archbishop of Milan, announced plans of reconvening the council in the spirit John XXIII's progressive intentions for the church. The agenda included the relationship of the Catholic Church with other religions, the reform of religious life, the role of the laity in the church, and a total transformation of the liturgy. It was a groundbreaking event, since these issues had never before been opened to change. What makes Vatican II even more revolutionary, though, is its inclusion of women, as auditors, or observers, at the third session of the council.

Before Vatican II, women's status and role in the church was distinctly privatized and silent. Women could clean church sanctuaries, the altar, linens, and priests' clothing. They could clean liturgy paraphernalia, including the purificator,

⁶⁰ "Teheran is Quiet After 2-Day Riots," *New York Times*, June 8, 1963, P 6

¹ Mary Luke Tobin, "Women in the Church Since Vatican II," *America* 155.12 (1988): 244.

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which holds the consecrated wine, but only after a priest rinsed it off, lest a woman should touch any residue of the blood of Christ. They could clean sacred vessels, but only with white gloves, and could arrange flowers, remove candle grease, and replace candles for the altar servers.² Participation in mass was limited to males, except for consumption of the Eucharist, which was open to all Catholic congregants. Women not only resembled handmaids to the church, but were patronized on a deeper level, deemed not worthy of touching sacred objects, largely due to the fear of menstruating women at the time. This taboo was considered a reason for women's exclusion from ritual ceremonies. Interestingly, this reasoning does not justify the banning of girl altar servers. Female altar servers were not, in fact, approved by the pope until 1994.³

Essentially, women were restricted to a private, passive role in the church. Even nuns were prohibited from active roles in the liturgy. Furthermore, pre-Vatican II social conditions for nuns were very confining. Although entrance into the religious life for women opened up educational and other opportunities, "the sisters were often the indentured servants of the hierarchical church."⁴ They even served as chamber maids to male students at seminaries. Nuns' actions were monitored and had to be approved by male authorities in the church.⁵ Their very life structures were shaped by a Middle Ages, authoritarian structure, having to ask permission from the mother superior to do menial tasks, such as turning on the lights and answering the phone.⁶ They were rarely exposed to the outside world. In regards to education, nuns, in some cases, had to sit outside of classrooms to listen to the lectures, and their grades were sometimes not posted along with the men's because they were significantly higher.⁷ Even nuns' dress was confining. Their uniforms covered everything except the face and hands, were uncomfortable, and took much time to put on.⁸ Women religious were restricted, had a domestic role in the church and were largely kept from the outside world. There was much potential, then, at Vatican II for their liberation.

Laywomen before Vatican II were active in school communities, in church fundraisers, and school carpools. Few, if any, had influence on parish decisions or held positions in the parish offices. The image of women was inseparable with their reproductive processes. There was a "stereotype that sexuality and childbirth made women ritually unclean."⁹ Women had to go through a process of "churching,"

² Carmel McEnroy, *Guests in Their Own House: The Women of Vatican II*, (New York, Crossroad Publishing Company, 1996), 16. Background information about women, both nuns and laywomen, was derived from McEnroy's book, the film *Faithful Revolution*, and a phone interview with Sr. Rita Hardy and Sr. Colette.

³ *Ibid.*, 16. All reference to the menstruation taboo came from McEnroy's book.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁶ *The Faithful Revolution*, produced by Sherry Rovard, Vatican II Productions; Lyrick Studios, 1996.

⁷ McEnroy, 18.

⁸ Erin Hardy, Interview by author, New Orleans, Louisiana, 28 March 2004.

⁹ McEnroy, 19. Background information on lay women before Vatican II, in addition to this quote, is wholly derived from McEnroy's book.

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or a cleansing, after giving birth. Men engaged in a birth did not go through any such process. Pregnant girls still in school were forced to drop out, while the boys also responsible for the pregnancy were not. In cases of domestic violence, women who sought consolation or aid in the church were sent back to their abusive husbands and were told to try harder to please them. Laywomen and laymen were not allowed to participate in the liturgy. By the time Vatican II had been called, "something of a women's liberation movement was gaining strength among female church goers and even nuns . . ."¹⁰ Many Catholic women, especially in the historical context of other denominations gaining more social progress, were reading more, were realizing their silent and ignored presence in the church, and decidedly wanted to be more active.¹¹ This social awareness was developing as a result of the emerging social and intellectual movements of the time.

The 1960's was a time of tremendous social reform. The civil rights movement, the women's rights movement, and the gay/lesbian movement were all underway. Betty Friedan had just published *The Feminine Mystique*, which decried women's confining domestic roles and its ill effects on women and backed these theories with credible psychological and sociological data. Injustices to women were exposed in society, in the work place, and in religion. This social dynamism was bound to have repercussions on the church.¹² Meanwhile, at the second session of Vatican II, a progressive minded priest, often hailed "champion of the women's cause," decided to say something about it.¹³

On October 23, 1963, Cardinal Leon Josef Suenens, archbishop of Malines and council moderator, commented that it made no sense that women were not present at the council and that a whole half of humanity was missing.¹⁴ He called for an increase in the number and diversity of lay auditors, who were also, but not as dramatically, underrepresented at the council. Petition and lobbying for the inclusion of more laity and women followed. Women arrived a year later at the third session of the Vatican II council.

There were twenty-three women from fourteen different countries who had been invited to Vatican II by the time of its cessation in 1965. Ten were women religious, and thirteen were laywomen. The women invited were chosen for their leadership in the church, being heads of various organizations and orders, from local communities to international proportions. Mary Luke Tobin, one of three Americans invited, was president of a national conference of superior generals of women religious. She was actually on her way to Rome to be closer to the excitement when she received news of her invitation. Pilar Bellosillo of Spain, president of a world-wide union of catholic women, attended. Australian Rosemary Goldie, who worked inside the Vatican, was secretary for an international committee for lay

¹⁰ Paul Hofmann, *The Vatican's Women, Female Influence at the Holy See*, (New York, St. Martin's Press, 2002), 187.

¹¹ McEnroy, 19-20.

¹² *Faithful Revolution*.

¹³ McEnroy, 36.

¹⁴ McEnroy, 36.

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people. The Superior General of the Daughters of Charity, Suzanne Guillemain of France, who was a key figure in changing her order's huge coronet habit to a simple blue veil, was also invited. Frenchwoman Marie Louise Monnet was a foundress for an international movement for the laity, and Sabine De Valon was superior general of the Religious of the Sacred Heart. Others, including a Mexican wife and husband, two Italian war widows, and women from the Middle East, Africa, Eastern Europe, and South America were also in attendance.¹⁵

Mary Luke Tobin, upon arriving at St. Peter's Basilica, received a card and was told that she could attend "sessions which are of interest to women." In response, Tobin defiantly said, "Well, I'll go everyday."¹⁶ Women's participation in the council was minimal, compared to that of active members, who were all male clergy. Women, along with laymen, were invited as auditors, or observers. Some of the women auditors petitioned the pope twice to be able to speak in the aula, or main discussion place of the council, all to no avail.¹⁷ However, some of the auditors were granted permission to participate as full voting members of the commission to write one of the sixteen documents produced at Vatican II, *Guadium et Spes*, or "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World." This was uniquely the work of Bernard Haring, a member of the council, who had a history of stirring up trouble in the traditionally-minded Catholic church. Haring later wrote the forward for Carmel McEnroy's *Guests in Their Own House: The Women of Vatican II*, the only book written on the women of Vatican II and their participation. After efforts were made the first time to gain admittance for women at the commission, one of its officials, Cardinal Antonutti, made the bold remark, "You may try again at the fourth Vatican council." This is just one example of conservative clergy's response to the presence of women at the council. In any case, Haring would not stop there. He spoke to another official, Bishop Guano, who, after some coaxing on Haring's part, agreed to invite six women auditors as voting members for the commission. This commission, in particular, was important for women to attend, since it dealt with the church's teachings on the modern world, of which women were 55% a part. Haring chose and invited the women, himself. Among the women chosen were Tobin, Goldie, Bellosillo, Guilleman, Monnet, and Vendrik.

In the film *The Faithful Revolution*, a documentary on Vatican II, Goldie explains that the women, at first, were seen as outsiders, as foreigners at the council, and were treated in special ways. She was relieved when women were finally "taken for granted," able to participate in the commissions on the same level as men. They did not want to be seen as a marginalized or token group in the council. They wanted to be treated as equal human beings and members of the church, without discrimination. At this time, women were on the defensive against the term "men" as generic, supposedly including women in its meaning. Moreover,

¹⁵ McEnroy, Carmel, "Women of Vatican II: Recovering a Dangerous Memory," in *The Church in the Nineties*, ed. by Pierre Hegy. (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1993), 150-51. This biographical information in this paragraph comes from this McEnroy's article.

¹⁶ Faithful Revolution.

¹⁷ McEnroy, "Dangerous Memory," 154.

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the texts of Vatican II contain few specific references to women, fourteen to be exact. "This was the deliberate and significant action on the part of female auditors. They wanted to avoid anything that would define women's role in a rigid or poetic way that would ultimately be limiting. . . Their presupposition was that all women . . . in the church are laity, not clerics, despite" the division between lay and religious. The problem was that the male council members had a tendency to talk about women in their texts in a flowery or glorified way, idealizing them as virtuously superior, and giving them empty praise. Simply talking about women in this way and would not solve any of the church's modern problems nor advance its social progress. It was actually regressive to achieving equality within the church. Goldie summarized women's concerns about this. During her work on a sub commission for *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, or the "Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People," French archbishop Claude Dupuy asked her, "Should the council speak of women?" Realizing their chance to officially state their position on women and the church, the female auditors consulted, and Goldie replied in writing to Dupuy:

Yes, the council should speak about women, on condition that women are not isolated as a problem apart, as it were on the fringe of society and the modern world, or as if real problems that women experience were their exclusive concern.

1. It seems to me to be necessary to make clear that society is made up of men and women, a fact not without importance for the mission of the church in the world.

2. It would be necessary to stress some aspects that concern women more directly, but always showing that these problems are aspects of an overall human evolution which concerns both men and women.¹⁸

In short, according to Goldie, women are not a superfluous group to the church. They are an essential part of the church and society and should be treated equally, not as an adjunct. And importantly, social problems such as sexism are not women's problems, but problems of all humans, concerning both men and women, whose responsibility to solve should be shared by all. Goldie and the other auditors wanted equality, not exceptional treatment.

The reforms of Vatican II were diverse. For religious women, Vatican II got them out of the convents and into the world. For laywomen as well as laymen, the changes were more generic, involving them in the ministry more, included more progressive teachings on marriage, family, and sparked future discourse on issues such as birth control and annulments. What incorporated both religious and laywomen, though, was the "Pastoral constitution on the Church in the Modern World," or *Guadium et Spes*. For the first time, the church declared human equality. It condemned discrimination of any kind. "But any kind of social or cultural discrimination in basic personal rights on the grounds of sex, race, color, social conditions, language or religion, must be curbed and eradicated as incompatible

¹⁸ McEnroy, "Dangerous Memory," 150.

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with God's design."¹⁹ With this bold statement, the church called for the suppression of discrimination not only in the modern world, but within its own walls, too.

Reforms for women religious were outlined in *Perfectae Caritatis*, or the "Decree on the Up-to-Date Renewal of Religious Life. In an interview, Sr. Rita, a Carmelite nun from rural Louisiana, was asked what changes she thought were most memorable, she replied, "Where to begin?" The changes for women religious were, indeed, drastic. Sr. Mary Luke Tobin says the changes sent nuns "moving to a greater autonomy." They were no longer seen as minors within a patriarchal church, with strict rules governing their whole world. They were called to the outside world, now, to minister to the needs of society. They began work in prisoner care, established soup kitchens, and did other work for the poor. Vatican II made it possible for women to emerge into society. The amount of social work in which nuns engage today would not be possible without the reforms of Vatican II.

Cardinal Suenens, who first suggested inviting women to the council, published his book *Women in the Modern World* during the Vatican II. He advocated the transformation of religious life for them and encouraged entrance into the larger world. He said women should get out of 15th century dress and escape restrictions.²⁰

Nuns' dress was also therefore one of the major reforms of Vatican II. It says that religious dress "must be suited to the time and place and to the needs of the apostolate. The dress, of men or of women, which is not in conformity with these norms ought to be changed." Clothing for women religious covered everything except the hands and face. Nuns' habits, which were large, cumbersome head-dresses, were altered or replaced by simple veils. One nun commented on how strange it was to feel the wind blowing through her hair. Young students of nuns couldn't wait to see for themselves that their teachers actually had ears and hair, which were previously covered by the habit. According to Mary Luke Tobin, the modernization of religious dress was already taking place within religious societies, and the council simply affirmed these changes.²¹ It is important to mention, though, that many women religious were threatened by and resisted these changes. Reasons for such resistance include fear of change and a deeply embedded patriarchal mindset. The influence of tradition on pre-Vatican II church society must not be underestimated. Vatican II, with its then revolutionary and radical changes, was viewed with horror by many. However, opponents of the council could not stop the ball of change that was already rolling. *Perfectae Caritatis* also called for the proper training and education of the religious. Therefore, more educational opportunities opened for the women religious. These changes, including the emergence of nuns into society, the encouragement of religious social work, and the modernization of dress, liberated nuns. This liberation allowed them greater autonomy in their communities, to find their own gifts and talents and to use them to serve the needs of the world.

¹⁹ Austin Flannery, *The Basic Sixteen Documents of Vatican II*, 194.

²⁰ Faithful Revolution.

In regards to the laity, Vatican II essentially launched them into a more active role. The language of the mass was changed from Latin to the vernacular, so that the congregation could actually understand, and resultingly engage in, the liturgy. *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, or "Decree of the Apostolate of Lay People," enabled the laity, including female laity, to become parish officials, and members of the choir. Importantly, the laity were now allowed to participate in liturgical rituals, as readers and even eucharistic ministers, who administer communion to the congregation. These positions were previously limited to the male clergy. This new role for the laity signified the church's realization of the importance of its lay people. They were no longer silent spectators, but active members. Therefore, the division between the clergy and the laity was lessened. This call to action was a spiritual process for many, and made the mission of the church a collaborative effort for all.

Other changes for the laity include teachings on marriage and family. Marriage was acknowledged as a complete sacrament itself, and the dignity and spirituality of it was renewed. Importantly, conjugal relationships were seen as equally important to having children.²² Before Vatican II, procreation tended to be seen as more important than the parents' relationship. Now, fostering a loving relationship with one's spouse and growing in the church with her/him was just as sacred as having children. Married couples could now flourish in the church, having more purpose in the church beyond procreation. Overall, Vatican II made the laity more equal with the clergy, granting them a greater responsibilities and potential, to grow and to serve, within the church.

Two controversial issues involving women were not directly discussed at the council. However, discussion of them is said to have been sparked by the spirit of Vatican II. Indeed, they have had lasting effects on Roman Catholic women. First, annulment was made possible for extreme cases, such as spousal abuse, allowing victims of domestic violence to break their marriage union in the eyes of God and to escape an abusive spouse. Second, birth control became open to discussion, by Paul VI, after the closing of Vatican II. The stance of the church at the end of Vatican II was that birth control was up to the discretion of each married couple. The pope called for a commission on birth control, whose members did extensive research within the catholic global community, performing surveys and looking into impoverished regions. Their findings prompted them to recommend the approval of the use of birth control.²³ To the bitter disappointment of many of the commissioners, the Papal Commission on Birth Control's recommendations were ignored. In 1968, the papal encyclical *Humanae Vitae* was issued, forbidding birth control. However, many Catholics did not accept this, and the phrase "cafeteria Catholic" was coined, alluding to the tendency of Catholics to ignore certain church doctrines that they don't approve.²⁴ Patty Crowley, a commission member, recalls one Catholic mother who asked her, "Is contraceptive sex

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Hofmann, 188.

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irresponsible when I have already born ten little responsibilities?" This calls to mind the problems of overpopulation in destitute areas, the financial situations of couples and families, and the control of women's bodies, which are all modern arguments for the use of birth control. In any case, the pope's neglect of the commission on birth control's findings, the ignoring of facts, has not met the needs of the modern world.

At the closing of the second Vatican Council, on December 8, 1965, women were addressed with a special message,

the Church is proud to have glorified women. . . to have brought into relief her basic equality with man. But the hour is coming, in fact has come, when the vocation of woman is being achieved in its fullness, the hour in which woman acquires in the world an influence, an effect, and a power never hitherto achieved.²⁵

The first part of this comment displays the tendency of the bishops to romanticize or pedestalize women to an image of superior virtue, which is rooted in fantasy, not reality, and does nothing for women's status in society. However, the second part, hailed as "ecclesial dynamite," by Carmel McEnroy, predicts more power for women in the world and church in future years. This legacy, this progressiveness on part of the church, must not be forgotten by today's women and men.

The question now arises whether or not Vatican II has had lasting effects, and if the church has lived up to its legacy of opening its doors up to women. Carmel McEnroy suggests that the church has not lived up to this legacy. "No," the church keeps saying to women's pleas, for ordination, birth control, and recognition of their existence.²⁶ She also mentions the exclusion of women from policy-making in the church and that "the ground gained at Vatican II is blatantly being eroded."²⁷ Mary Luke Tobin, who has written a considerable amount on her experience at Vatican II and its implications for women, is more optimistic. She cites the growing numbers of female and feminist theologians and biblical scholars who are gaining more credibility and attention from the church. She also mentions the greater openness of U.S. bishops to controversial issues. However, Tobin, too, finds disappointment in the non-ordination of women.²⁸ To better answer the question of Vatican II's legacy, however, attention must be given to some post-Vatican II developments.

Papal encyclicals and letters since Vatican II concerning women have had mixed reviews. In 1977, Paul VI issued *Inter Insigniores*, or the "Declaration Against the Ordination of Women." Again, Paul VI ordered a commission to investigate this issue, and seems to have ignored biblical findings, the commission's findings, and failed to consult international Catholic women's

²⁵ McEnroy, "Dangerous Memory," 156.

²⁶ McEnroy, "Guests," 265.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 266.

²⁸ Tobin, 254-55.

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agencies.²⁹ However, a year later in 1978, John Paul I, speaking to a crowd, made the stunning remark "God isn't just our father; God is also our mother,"³⁰ suggesting, for the first time by a pope, a female element to God. In 1985, *Mulieris Dignitatem*, "Women's Dignity," was issued by John Paul II. This encyclical reinforced the church's stance on birth control and abortion. In addition, interestingly, the pope expressed his belief that virginity was a superior state of existence for women than marriage and motherhood,³¹ perhaps extending praise to the women religious community. In 1994, the pope approved of girl altar servers, probably because some parishes had practiced it for over twenty years.³² And in 1995, in the "Letter to the Women of the World," John Paul II spoke against discrimination against females, called for equal opportunities in education, work, and politics, and called for more space for women in the social life of the church (but not the ministry or authoritative life). And, of course, the notion of ordination was rejected, in accordance with the gospel and tradition.³³ Since Vatican II, it seems as though the church has, in fact, made strides on the road to equality. The last three popes did something that no other popes have done in history: directly address women, and, in turn, social equality. The modern world, though, moves at a much quicker pace than the church, and steps such as these seem small and behind the times.

The rejection of the ordination of women is indeed a serious setback for Roman Catholic women. At a time when other Christian denominations allow female ministers, it is hard to be a part of an institution that denies one the same privilege. However, women can serve as parish officials and as other positions of authority in the church. Lay women have also shown much ambition in compensating for the shortage of priests and religious.³⁴ They have assumed the responsibilities of visiting hospitals and nursing homes, distributing communion to the sick, and teaching catechism to children. Some advocate reviving the position of "deaconess," the equal of the male "deacon," which was restored by Vatican II. A deacon can perform some of the tasks of priests, like the sacrament of baptism, the blessing of marriages, the reading of scripture, and other liturgical functions, but can be married. The role of deaconess is said to have existed in the time of the apostles. "It would be a breakthrough," one nun says of the restoration of the deaconess, "opening to them at least the lowest level of priesthood. More would come later."³⁵ The role of deaconess would certainly be a huge first step toward not only the ordination of women, but the full representation and development of women in the Catholic church. However, no official statements have been made concerning the restoration of the position.

²⁹ McEnroy, "Guests," 270.

³⁰ Hofmann, 194.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 197.

³² McEnroy, "Guests," 271.

³³ Hofmann, 198. All information about the "Letter to the Women of the World" is from Hofmann.

³⁴ Interview.

³⁵ Hofmann, 199. The deaconess and the subsequent historical information is derived from Hofmann's book, although McEnroy also mentions that the role existed in ancient times.

Women and Vatican II

Vatican II was a liberation for women in the church, for both religious and lay women. It proclaimed the equality of all people and denounced discrimination of any kind. By inviting women to the council, the church committed an irrevocable act: it involved women in the decision-making body of the church. It allowed women temporary mobility on a hierarchy that had never been climbed by female feet before. Since then, women have assumed greater leadership and participation in the church. However, the message resounding from the closing ceremony of the second Vatican council has been muffled. Women do not realize the legacy their predecessors, the women at Vatican II, left them. Very few are aware of their very presence at the council at all. In any case, women must spread the word. They must continue the struggle for equality in a hypocritical church. Tradition as justification for sexism is no longer tolerable.