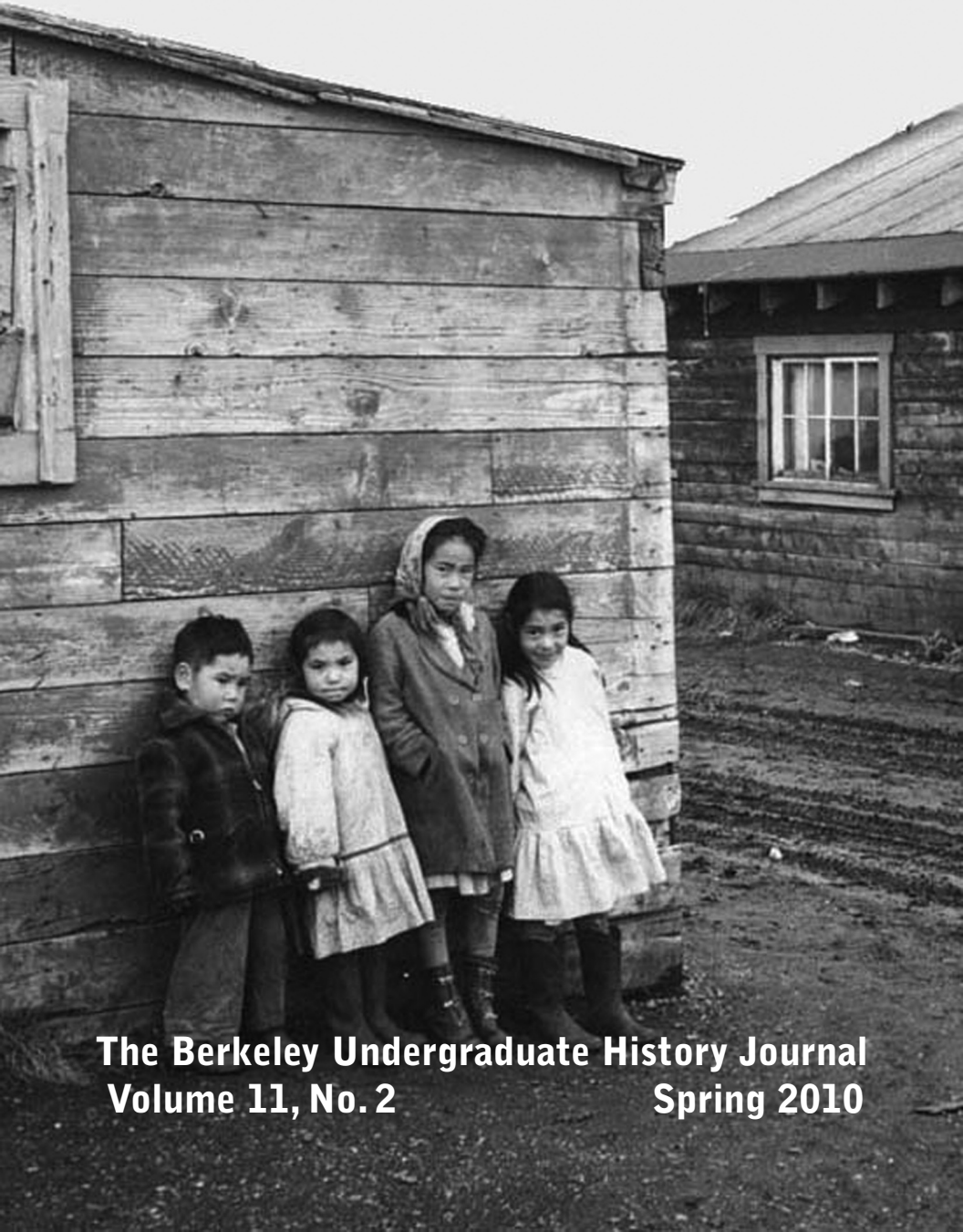


# Clio's Scroll



**The Berkeley Undergraduate History Journal**  
**Volume 11, No. 2** **Spring 2010**

Clios Scroll  
Berkeley Undergraduate History  
Journal

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Clio's Scroll: The Berkeley Undergraduate History Journal is an ASUC-sponsored journal produced by UC Berkeley's chapter of Phi Alpha Theta, a national history honor society. It aims to provide undergraduates with the opportunity to publish historical works and to train staff members in the editorial process of an academic journal. It is published each semester with the generous support of the Associated Students of the University of California, the UC Berkeley Department of History, and the Office of Student Life. Clio's Scroll is not an official publication of the University of California, Berkeley. The views expressed herein are the views of the writers and not necessarily the views of the ASUC or the views of UC Berkeley.

## Editor's Note

When considering our 21st century world, a term that comes to mind for many is “glocalization.” This rather bulky term is a contraction of the two words “globalization” and “localization.” Although at first glance these terms appear to be polar opposites, their unlikely intertwining is inspired by the power to “think globally, act locally.”

In that vein, the Spring 2010 Issue of *Clio's Scroll* aims to showcase the different local theaters of social and cultural production. Within this issue, the local theater has a very fluid definition, and can be as specific as a single woman or as broad as the entire Middle East and Africa. In Chad Converse's “Religious Assimilation and Roman Foreign Policy in the East,” the “local” is a large geographic region that included Anatolia, Egypt, Greece, Mesopotamia, and Syria. Chad explores how contact with local religions of the East influenced a convergence in Roman religious assimilation and foreign policy. For Suzy Babb's “The Occupation of Alcatraz: An Enduring Legacy,” the island of Alcatraz serves as the local backdrop - for us in Berkeley, a resoundingly “local” site - for the Native Power movement of the 1960s and 1970s. For the occupiers of that rocky island, Alcatraz's inhospitable topography and lack of resources became an exploration of federal marginalization of the Native American reservation. In Morgan Lewis' “Story of an American Nymphomaniac,” the “theater” is the life of a single woman, Catherine. By analyzing how her case is presented by her physician, Morgan is able to gain key insight into the sexual mores and gender definitions that dominated the Victorian era at large. Lastly, Sarah Cummins' “Race and Organized Labor: A Study into the Chicago Stockyard's Unionization Campaign, 1917-1922,” the Chicago stockyards became a site of local confrontation with the stark racial realities of America in the early 20th century. In all these cases, local and individual theaters of action give meaning to or exemplify overarching, “global” phenomena, proving the power of individuals in a decidedly “glocal” way.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our staff of associate editors for all of their patience and assistance -- and all those who submitted for sharing their amazing work with us. We would also like to thank Professor Koziol for lending us his support. In addition, this issue would not have been possible without the generous financial assistance of the Student Opportunity Fund and the ASUC Contingency Fund.

We hope you enjoy,

The Editors-in-Chief  
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## Note from Professor Geoffrey Koziol

One of the most common reasons smart undergraduates give for going into History is that it is the least restrictive of all social science and humanities disciplines. One can ask any kind of question of any period or place and use any kind of source or model that helps answer it. The truth of this is certainly shown by the four papers published in this issue of *Clio's Scroll*, which share little in their questions, sources, and approaches. Despite this diversity, if one knows other history departments in the country, one can still see a few characteristics that make these very much Berkeley-style histories, the most interesting being this: all four authors ground big questions in specific events and sources. A frequent criticism of historians is that we often seem to get bogged down in details. But detail is everything for historians. Examining an event or a source in all its particularity is the way we test our ideas and interpretations and measure abstract theories against real practice. Assuming equal rigor in analysis of the details, one difference between good history and mediocre is whether or not a good question lies behind the analysis.

And these four students ask very good questions. What was the place of local religion in an empire like Rome's? How did the new medical “science” of the nineteenth century regard women? Did the occupation of Alcatraz Island in 1969 by Native Americans have any lasting effect? Why did the United States, in such marked contrast to Europe, not develop any unified labor movement? Yet in good history, the questions are always subordinate to the details, and the details are often surprising. In Chad Converse's contribution, for example, it is fascinating to see how successfully Rome integrates local religions without suppressing their distinctiveness. And in studying efforts to unionize the Chicago stockyards, Sarah Cummins makes us keenly aware that the effects of slavery shaped every aspect of American society long after slavery had ended, in places it had never existed, in beliefs and practices one would otherwise consider unrelated.

This is one of the glories of history's embrace of the local: in recreating experiences of the past, it has the capacity to change our understanding of human possibility, and the present.

Geoffrey Koziol  
Professor of History

## **Religious Assimilation and Roman Foreign Policy in the East**

By Chad Converse

Roman expansion into the diverse territories of the Near East involved a delicate combination of military and political dynamism and religious sensitivity. The Eastern civilizations with which Rome came into contact rested on ancient foundations, and it would prove difficult to exercise effective control over Eastern populations whose world-views differed fundamentally from those espoused by the Romans. Roman military strength was often sufficient to topple existing regimes in Anatolia, Egypt, Greece, Mesopotamia, Syria, and other Eastern territories, and through political maneuvering the Romans were generally able to install rulers whose interests coincided with those of Rome. However, resistance would continue on a local level as long as Roman influence remained confined to the secular sphere of politics and the military; until the Romans could develop a sacred identity recognizable within the diverse ideological frameworks of the Eastern provincial populations, the objectives of the rulers and the ruled would remain at odds.

Over time, Roman policy in the East reveals an increasing awareness of the utility of religion as a medium of cultural assimilation. Expansion into the Near East brought Rome into contact with a great variety of local communities, each with its own language, history, religion, and administrative apparatus. Often, local religious and political ideologies overlapped; in other words, the legitimacy of rulers was closely related to their sacred identity. In order to incorporate the diverse Eastern communities into a single coherent body, the Romans were obliged to accommodate local religious traditions, combining them with standardized features

of Roman administration. It is critical to understand that, in the context of Mediterranean religion, the term “assimilation” implies a mutual intercourse of attitudes, customs, and ideas among previously distinct cultural groups. The literary and archaeological evidence strongly suggests that the process of religious assimilation operated in both directions, flowing from Rome into the East as well as from the East into Rome.

A brief overview of Roman intervention in the East might help to illuminate the situation. As Rome emerged as the dominant Western power at the close of the Punic Wars in the third century BCE, she found herself drawn out of Italy and into the wider scope of Mediterranean politics. Scholarship on the topic of Roman expansion has offered various convincing explanations for the growing urgency of Eastern concerns at the time, but the bottom line is that the Roman state was compelled to turn the greater part of its military attention toward the East. Over the next few centuries – until the end of the Republic – Rome would engage in sporadic warfare with Hellenistic kingdoms such as the Macedonian dynasty in Greece, the Seleucid dynasty in Anatolia and Syria, and the Ptolemaic dynasty in Egypt. Other challenges to Roman authority, such as armed resistance in Armenia, Judaea, and Parthia, were also overcome during the imperial period. Eventually, the Romans defeated each of these rivals and assumed control of large segments of their population and territory. By the reign of the emperor Trajan in the early second century CE, most of the Near East was firmly under Roman control.

However, military strength and political prowess alone can not account for the relative success of Roman administration in the Eastern regions during this period. In fact, a subtle, complicated process of religious assimilation was at work, ensuring a closer identification between Roman and Eastern world-views and, consequently, providing legitimacy for Roman hegemony. While prolonged social interaction between discrete parties is bound to result in some degree of unconscious imitation of each other’s behaviors, the consistency of Roman attitudes toward Eastern religion suggests a pattern of conscious manipulation. It is sometimes difficult, given the fragmentary nature of the sources, to distinguish between

cases of unconscious imitation and cases directed by a deliberate policy of accommodation.

When considering Roman policy in the East, it is important to keep in mind the tension between prominent Roman individuals in the provinces and the central political mechanism located at Rome. Throughout the Republican period, and even, to some extent, into the imperial period, the Senate and other collective Roman political structures exercised nominal control over foreign policy. On the ground, the situation was infinitely more complicated. Roman military commanders exhibited increasing independence from the capitol, commanding more and more influence until eventually they seem to have served as sole representatives of Roman interests and creators of precedent. Later, individual responsibility for Roman foreign policy became institutionalized in the person of the divine emperor. These details raise an important question: To what extent does Roman policy with regard to religious assimilation in the East reflect the private motivations of individuals as opposed to official policy dictated by the state? Now that we have identified a constellation of questions and concerns, we may begin the difficult search for answers.

By turning first to the secondary literature, we will determine with greater accuracy the scope of the problem. Scholarship on the topic of Roman religion is abundant and varied, and there also exists a significant body of work addressing the indigenous religions of the Near East. The present study, however, is concerned with the point of contact between Roman and Eastern religious practices. One category of religious practice in particular stands out as a link between Rome and the Near East: the public and private ceremonies associated with the mystery religions.

The term “mystery religion” needs some clarification. Generally speaking, the mysteries were systems of ritual and mythology celebrated by initiated members of private organizations. Following this rather broad definition allows us to identify active mystery cults operating within practically every major ethnic group that the Romans encountered in the Near East. Greeks celebrated the mysteries at Eleusis and the mysteries at Samothrace in addition to secret Orphic and Dionysiac rites. Anatolian natives cel-



ebred mysteries associated with Cybele, the mother of the gods. The Mithraic mysteries originated in Persia. Mysteries of Isis and Serapis were celebrated in Egypt. We should include Judaism as the primary mystery religion celebrated in Judaea. While there were certainly other mystery religions, those listed above were perhaps the most enduring in antiquity and the ones most frequently encountered by the Romans in their expansion into the Near East.

The exact nature of the mysteries is, of course, mysterious. In most cases, the central rites of the mystery religions were successfully kept secret and, as a result, scholars ancient and modern have had difficulty reconstructing them with accuracy. Fortunately, the present study is not concerned as much with the details of the rites as with the behavior of prominent Romans in relation to the mysteries. We will primarily be examining evidence from the primary sources, which, as always, must be approached with caution. A number of recent studies exist that examine the individual mystery religions, and we will draw upon these secondary sources where they provide relevant insight into the mutual interaction of Roman and Eastern world-views. We will proceed chronologically from Rome's earliest documented encounters with Eastern mystery religions until the mature development of the imperial cult in the first century CE, finishing with a note on the subsequent spread of Christianity.

The first series of encounters between Rome and the mystery religions of the Near East seems to have occurred during the third century BCE. Virtually every case involves the importation of foreign cults into the city of Rome itself. The very first extant example of a foreign cult brought to Rome is preserved in the anonymous work *On Famous Men*, where the author records the transportation of a statue of the healing god Aesculapius from the distant sanctuary at Epidauros to the sacred island in the Roman Tiber.<sup>1</sup> The author claims that the Romans imported the cult "on account of a pestilence," and that, after the statue (and the snake that accompanied it) had arrived, "the pestilence subsided with

1 Anonymous, *On Famous Men* 22.1.1-3, trans. Lewis Reinhold in *Rome: The Augustan Age*, ed. Kitty Chisholm and John Ferguson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 393.

astonishing speed."<sup>2</sup> This event, said to have occurred around 293 BCE, was not the last of its kind. Soon, the Anatolian cult of Cybele, the great mother, would arrive in Italy, where its goddess would take on the name Magna Mater.

The cult of Magna Mater was brought to Rome in the third century BCE and remained important for some centuries thereafter. Around 294 BCE, the city officials in Rome instituted a regular festival in honor of the goddess, known as the Megalesia.<sup>3</sup> This official action, most likely approved by the governing body of the city, preceded by some ninety years the full-scale importation of the cult. Examining a few details about this process may help us understand its significance. First, it is important to bear in mind the political situation at the time: Rome would barely have finished her wars with Carthage when she was drawn into hostile conflict with the Hellenistic kingdoms that occupied Greece and Anatolia around the turn of the second century. Already by the middle of the third century, Rome was actively attempting to create for itself an identity that would fit into the existing structure of Greek society. Epigraphic evidence suggests that, around 220 BCE, the Romans had consulted the oracle of Apollo at Delphi, been instructed to import the cult of Cybele from its major center at Pergamon to Rome, and had deposited thanks offerings in the sanctuary.<sup>4</sup> This type of behavior is indicative of a desire on the part of Rome to interact with the Greek cities through the traditional Greek methods and reveals an interest in accommodating Eastern religious tradition. The city of Pergamon, furthermore, was the seat of power of Attalus I, an important Roman ally in western Anatolia, and it makes sense for the Romans to want to cement this relationship in the most permanent of ways – by sharing systems of worship.

Upon receiving permission from Delphi and Pergamon, the Romans imported the official cult of Cybele into Rome in 204 BCE. Livy, in a famously controversial passage, describes the ar-

2 Ibid.

3 Lynn E. Roller, *In Search of God the Mother: The Cult of Anatolian Cybele* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 289.

4 Roller, *Anatolian Cybele*, 281.



rival of the sacred objects of the goddess in Rome: “Publius Cornelius Scipio was ordered to go to Ostia with all the matrons of Rome to meet the goddess.”<sup>5</sup> The opening line reveals the significance of the cult for the ruling class in Rome: Scipio, one of the leading citizens, accompanied by all the important women, is “ordered” – presumably by the city’s administrative apparatus – to receive the objects of the goddess. Here the mystery religion has been inextricably linked with the rulers of Rome and given an official place in the affairs of the city. The significance of this point emerges when we compare the reception of the cult of Magna Mater in 204 BCE with the reaction to the celebration of the Bacchanalia in Rome in 168 BCE.

The ceremonies associated with both Magna Mater and Bacchus involved a challenge to traditional Roman values. Ancient Roman authors make frequent reference to the bizarre and violent acts inherent in the worship of Magna Mater, citing loud and raucous music, bloody self-laceration, and even repulsive public displays of self-castration by her adherents. Although the ritual self-castration has been rejected by modern scholars as implausible, other aspects of Cybele-worship, such as exciting music and violent dancing, were no doubt abrasive to conservative Romans.<sup>6</sup> However, the cult endured, albeit under official regulation, until the end of the empire.<sup>7</sup> The mysteries associated with Bacchus, however, produced a very different reaction when they were brought to Rome in the second century BCE. Again, Livy is the source of this much-disputed passage: “An obscure Greek had arrived in Etruria ... he was a practitioner of occult and nocturnal rites. The secrets of the mystery religion were at first revealed to only a few people, but soon began to be taught widely to both men and women ... this evil pollution spread from Etruria to Rome like the contagion

5 Livy, *A History of Rome* 29.14.10, trans. Jo-Ann Shelton, *As the Romans Did* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 401-402.

6 Roller, *Anatolian Cybele*, ch.9-10.

7 Ibid.

of a plague.”<sup>8</sup> Livy goes on to describe the loud music that accompanied the Bacchic celebrations, the accusations of deviant sex, murder, and conspiracy by Roman citizens, and a subsequent edict of the Senate condemning the establishment of common funds, the swearing of oaths, the meetings in secret and ordering the destruction of Bacchic places of worship in the city.<sup>9</sup> The edict seems designed to prevent political upheaval in the form of popular revolts. As Shelton points out, the aggressive actions of the Senate against the Bacchanalia were likely a result of that cult’s unofficial introduction to the city; the cult of Magna Mater, although violent and alien, was introduced and could be regulated by the state and was therefore allowed to subsist.<sup>10</sup>

Here we might pause and ask a question: why were Eastern mystery cults brought to Rome during the Republican period? The ancient sources offer some answers: in the cases of Aesculapius and Cybele, the god and goddess were brought at an oracle’s insistence to heal the city of its troubles.<sup>11</sup> Some modern authors have suggested that the cult of Magna Mater in Rome developed as a result of distress by the inability to defeat the Carthaginians.<sup>12</sup> These explanations are not completely out of place. However, they are premised on the assumption that, for the Roman state, the Eastern cults represented a tangible source of consolation. This consolation has been viewed largely from the point of view of purely personal religious sentiment (i.e. the Romans felt that the cult itself would provide them with a solution to their problems); however, the adoption of these Eastern cults was not the decision of an individual but the calculated policy of the central government. As such, the importations of Eastern mystery religions at this stage should be viewed as Roman attempts to forge relationships with Eastern communities whence they might derive material succor rather than purely spiritual consolation. Jaime Alvar’s groundbreaking work *Romanising Oriental Gods* argues that Eastern cults were

8 Livy, *A History of Rome* 39.8, 9, trans. Shelton, 397-398.

9 CIL 1.2.581, trans. Shelton, 400.

10 Shelton, *As the Romans Did*, 401.

11 Livy, *A History of Rome* 25.1.6-8, trans. Shelton, 395.

12 Ibid.

so closely related to civic cults that we must view Roman interest in regionally specific religions as interest in the cities that hosted those religions.<sup>13</sup> In other words, importation of the cult of Aesculapius from Pergamon into the city of Rome represents the unification of Pergamene and Roman world-views and the identification of the interests of the two cities.

A similar argument might be applied to Magna Mater. According to legend, the Romans were descended from the Trojans and, when Troy fell, the survivors (especially Aeneas) carried the icons of Trojan religion across to Italy. Later generations of Romans may have recognized a cultural connection with the peoples living in the region of Troy they may have seen the mysteries of Cybele celebrated by the Pergamenes and others as a primitive form of their own religion. On some level, the Roman importation of the cult of Magna Mater in the third century BCE may have been intended to re-establish a linkage with what was regarded as a closely-related ancestor in Anatolia. Such a thought process would not be out of place in the context of the wars with Carthage, when the desperate Roman state may have sought allies in strange places. The so-called “Trojan connection” may also apply to Roman intervention in the mysteries celebrated at Samothrace, an island not far from the site of ancient Troy. The first mention of Romans at Samothrace refers to the donations made by the Roman general Marcellus to the sanctuary there following his victories in Sicily in 212 BCE.<sup>14</sup> During the war with the Macedonian monarch Perseus, Rome officially recognized the rights of the sanctuary to offer asylum to political refugees. It became customary, after 93 BCE, for the Roman provincial administrators to be initiated into the mysteries of the Great Gods.<sup>15</sup> Samothrace is a powerful example of the willingness of the Roman state to accommodate local religious traditions into their administrative procedure.

13 Jaime Alvar, *Romanizing Oriental Gods* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Hotei Publishing, 2008), 1-17.

14 Susan Guettel Cole, *Theoi Megaloi: The Cult of the Great Gods at Samothrace* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill Publishing, 1984), 87.

15 Cole, *Great Gods at Samothrace*, 88-91.

The second century BCE saw the emergence of the cult of Roma in the territories of the Near East. It would be difficult to overstate the significance of the Roma cult in the context of Roman intervention in Eastern religions. Until now, we have seen the Romans importing Eastern religions to the West, but there is little evidence to indicate that Romans had an interest in presenting themselves to the Eastern populations as an object of veneration. In the course of her conflicts with the Hellenistic kingdom of Macedonia and the Seleucid dynasty in Anatolia and Syria, the Roman state encountered a well-established tradition of ruler cult. Hellenistic ruler cult had essentially begun during the lifetime of Alexander the Great; the individual rival city-states that formed the greatest segment of local authority in the East received benefits from their Macedonian overlord in exchange for public recognition in the form of altars, processions, regular sacrifices, and sacred images placed beside the traditional divinities worshipped in the city.<sup>16</sup> When Roman influence began to displace that of the Hellenistic kings, the image of Roma began to take the place of the earlier kings as the representation of the universal benefactor. Beginning in 195 BCE, cults of Roma became quite common.<sup>17</sup> Other forms of recognition of Roman authority also manifested in Eastern religion: the Hearth of the Romans, the cult of the People of the Romans, cults of ‘the universal Roman benefactors,’ and other organizations began appearing.

It was not long before individual Romans began to receive cult honors. This development should not be surprising, given that the collective cults of Roman benefaction derived ultimately from Hellenistic ruler cults, which, of course, centered on individuals. A passage from the Old Testament Book of *Maccabees* may provide some insight into the provincial attitude toward Roman leadership: “[The Romans] entrusted their government to one man for a year at a time, with absolute power over the whole empire and this man was obeyed by all without any envy or jealousy.”<sup>18</sup> The misconception

16 S. R. F. Price, *Rituals and Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 25-40.

17 Price, *Rituals and Power*, 41.

18 *First Book of Maccabees* 8, 15-16, trans. S.R.F. Price, 42.

tion that Romans obeyed one absolute ruler is probably a result of two factors. First, the Romans elected two powerful consuls for each year, one of which perhaps would be conducting affairs in the East. The second cause for such a misconception could be linked to the growing authority of Roman generals whose lengthy campaigns in the East provided them with virtually limitless power. These individuals, especially during the first century BCE, seemingly assumed sole responsibility for Roman foreign policy in the East, including intervention in local religious traditions.

We should briefly examine the evidence for religious intervention by prominent Roman generals during the late Republic. The first Roman figure to stand out in his exercise of supreme power in the East was Sulla, whose campaign against Mithridates of Pontus brought him into close contact with the religions of Greece. Plutarch's *Life of Sulla* provides the most relevant episodes, including Sulla's despoiling of the sacred treasures stored at Delphi, Epidauros, and Olympia.<sup>19</sup> After mentioning this incident, Plutarch names a number of prominent earlier Romans, including Titus Flamininus and Aemilius Paulus, claiming that, "these men had not only kept their hands off the temples of the Greeks, but had endowed them and honored them and done much to add to the general respect in which they were held."<sup>20</sup> The hostile behavior of Sulla toward the sacred treasures of the Greeks is further complicated by the addition of the detail that, during the same period, Sulla had himself initiated into the Eleusinian mysteries.<sup>21</sup> Clearly, if this is true, Sulla himself saw no contradiction in being initiated after robbing the treasures. Let us keep this point in mind as we continue.

Sulla's successor in the East was Lucullus, a general who successfully continued the war against Mithridates and brought Roman influence deeper into the East. The behavior of Lucullus, as reported by Plutarch, is striking in contrast to that of Sulla. He mentions the siege of the city of Sinope and how, after its destruc-

19 Plutarch, *Sulla* 12 (Reader, 179).

20 Ibid.

21 Plutarch, *Sulla* 26.1 (Perseus.Tufts.Edu, ed. Bernadotte Perrin).

tion, Lucullus rebuilt it in honor of Autolykus, a hero whose cult was celebrated in the city.<sup>22</sup> Later, upon crossing the Euphrates, Lucullus orders the sacrifice of some local heifers in accordance with the traditions of that region.<sup>23</sup> These actions reveal a desire to accommodate local religious customs. Another episode mentioned by Plutarch suggests that Lucullus, intentionally or not, established with the inhabitants of western Anatolia a relationship not unlike the ruler cults that had honored individual Hellenistic monarchs in the period preceding Roman intervention. Plutarch writes:

Lucullus, after filling Asia full of law and order, and full of peace, did not neglect the things which minister to pleasure and win favor, but during his stay at Ephesus gratified the cities with processions and triumphal festivals and contests of athletes and gladiators. And the cities, in response, celebrated festivals which they called Lucullea, to do honor to the man, and bestowed upon him what is sweeter than honor, their genuine good-will.<sup>24</sup>

The honors voted to Lucullus by the cities of western Anatolia bear strong resemblance to the sorts of rewards that deified rulers received in return for their benefactions during the Hellenistic period. The tradition of ruler cults was transmitted into Roman culture via the cult of Roma and the honors awarded to individual Roman generals such as Lucullus. One final example should suffice before we turn to the later manifestation of this tradition in the official cult of the Roman emperors.

After Lucullus' period of sovereignty in the East, and before Augustus' establishment of the imperial succession, Pompey brought much of the remaining territory and population of the Near East under Roman influence. There is no evidence to suggest that Pompey himself was initiated into any of the mystery religions; in fact, the mysteries are seldom if ever mentioned in the context of Pompey's Eastern campaigns. However, one significant event mentioned by Plutarch helps us to understand the early contact between Romans and the adherents of the Mithraic mysteries. After mentioning the holy places in the Eastern Mediterranean that

22 Plutarch *Lucullus* 23 (Reader, 288).

23 Plutarch *Lucullus* 24 (Reader, 290).

24 Plutarch *Lucullus* 23 (Reader, 287).

the pirates had plundered, Plutarch writes that, “They themselves offered strange sacrifices of their own at Olympus, where they celebrated secret rites or mysteries, among which were those of Mithras. These Mithraic rites, first celebrated by the pirates, are still celebrated today.”<sup>25</sup> This mention of the Mithraic mysteries gives us several pieces of information. First of all, we can say that, in the Roman mind, the mysteries originated in Cilicia among an unpleasant segment of society, namely, the pirates that had for so long hampered Roman affairs at sea and who had to be brutally suppressed by Pompey’s command. The cult of Mithras apparently was not, like the cult of Magna Mater, introduced deliberately into the Roman state. We know that in later times the cult gained popularity in Roman circles, particularly in the military. Perhaps the reason for this affinity lies in Plutarch’s statement that the cult was first encountered abroad by the Roman military.

The reign of Augustus coincides with the establishment of the official imperial cult. Details on the cult itself are irrelevant to the fact at hand; modern scholarship has examined these points in great detail.<sup>26</sup> It is enough for us to realize that the cult of the deified emperor is a specifically Roman adaptation of the Eastern tradition of Hellenistic ruler cults. The collective cults that had emerged earlier in recognition of Roman benefaction (i.e. the cult of Roma) were superceded to some extent by the establishment of divine honors for prominent Roman individuals operating in the provinces. With the accession of Augustus and the deification of his adopted father Julius Caesar, a radical change took place that would have a profound impact on the relationship between Roman and Eastern world-views. Foreign policy and intervention in Eastern religion, once regulated by collective bodies such as the Senate, now largely fell into the hands of the Emperor.

Here we will briefly examine the confusing approach taken by Augustus with regard to Eastern mystery religions in the city of Rome. In the *Res Gestae*, Augustus recorded a number of his religious honors: he mentions that, “the whole body of citizens, both privately and as municipalities, have with one accord continu-

25 Plutarch, *Pompey* 24 (Reader, 314).

26 Price, *Rituals and Power*, ch.6, 7, 8, and 9.

ally offered sacrifices for my health at all the shrines;” he mentions a decree of the Senate rendering him sacrosanct; he mentions building the “temple of the Great Mother on the Palatine;” he also mentions restoring the plundered treasures to the temples in Asia.<sup>27</sup> Here is a man that is conscious of his religious identity. He is a benefactor to Eastern religious communities, restoring their treasures abroad and building their temples in the city of Rome itself – and he is rewarded as a benefactor with different kinds of honors. However, Augustus seems to have favored certain categories of mystery religion more than others. We hear, for instance, that Augustus forbade the celebration of Egyptian rites in the city of Rome, although he restored the existing temples of Egyptian worship in the City.<sup>28</sup> A passage from Suetonius tells us that Augustus himself was initiated into the Eleusinian mysteries and worked to preserve the secret character of the rites; the same passage describes how, “during his journey through Egypt he would not go out of his way, however slightly, to honor the divine Apis bull; and praised his grandson Gaius for not offering prayers to Jehovah when he visited Jerusalem.”<sup>29</sup> These pieces of evidence point to a deliberate policy on the part of the ruler to encourage traditional Graeco-Roman religions at the expense of alien rites; the prohibition against Egyptian practices makes a certain amount of sense, given the effort Augustus had made to overthrow the last Ptolemaic dynasty in Egypt, where religion had long worked to legitimize the ruler.<sup>30</sup>

Augustus’ policy with regard to religious intervention reveals an interest in merging local traditions with the overarching sacred ideology of the Roman Empire. It is during the reign of Augustus that the first tensions begin to arise between the Jewish population in Judaea and its Roman overlords. Earlier encounters with the Jewish community had revealed the close connection

27 Augustus, *Res Gestae*, trans. Kitty Chisholm and John Ferguson.

28 Dio Cassius 53.2.4 (Reader, 214).

29 Suetonius *Augustus* 93 (Reader, 182).

30 Sarolta A. Takacs, *Isis and Serapis in the Roman World* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill Publishing, 1994), 27.



between the mysteries of their religion and the legitimacy of their rulers. Augustus was sensitive to the conservative nature of Jewish religion; he did not insist on bringing images of himself into the inviolable sanctuary at Jerusalem. Instead, the Jewish ruler Herod the Great, perhaps at the urging of Augustus, rebuilt the temple at great cost, adorning it with an expensive golden eagle, the symbol of Rome's authority. According to Josephus, a group of offended Jews pulled the eagle down, and a violent riot ensued.<sup>31</sup> This incident may reveal an early interest in combining the mysteries of the Roman emperor with the mysteries celebrated by the provincial Jewish population. It is easy to see how such an identification could theoretically benefit the empire by redirecting Eastern religious sentiment toward the Roman ruler. The Jews as a community rejected the proposition, and the situation in Judaea deteriorated over the next century. Tiberius again attempted to install Roman images in the temple and failed. After him, Caligula attempted to support the installation of the imperial cult in the temple at Jerusalem using sheer force. Josephus' account reports the failure of Caligula's attempt to bring the imperial image into contact with the mysteries of the Jewish God and the generally hostile attitude of the emperor toward the Jews.<sup>32</sup> Claudius during his reign granted concessions to the Jewish communities on a large scale, and, while there is little mention of Nero's attitude toward Judaism in the ancient sources, by the late 60's CE, Romans and Jews were engaged in a full-scale war.

As the present study comes to a close, it will be helpful to summarize our findings. Roman expansion into the Near East demanded more than military strength and political acumen. While these two factors were crucial in the process of conquering the Eastern territories and the people that ruled them, the Romans soon learned to consolidate their victories by linking themselves into the existing ideological frameworks of the sacred mysteries. The mysteries took different forms in different ethnic contexts, but were very often interconnected with the civic cult and the legitimization

of rulers. By intervening in the mysteries, the Romans were able to present themselves as members of the provincial communities with the same relationship to the realm of the divine. The chronological approach taken here has allowed us to identify an unbroken tradition of ruler cult that began with the Hellenistic monarchs and was later applied to Roma and other collective representations of Roman authority, until the growing influence of individual Roman generals and emperors replaced the decision-making power of the Senate with regard to intervention in Eastern religion. The tradition of the Hellenistic ruler cult found its parallel in the imperial cult dedicated to the mysteries of the individual Roman emperors. Finally, the resistance of the Jews against Roman attempts at religious assimilation, significant in itself, also points us toward an understanding of the development of a later mystery cult that would eventually claim to unite the entire Empire: Christianity.

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31 Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 17.149 (Perseus.Tufts.Edu, ed. William Whiston).

32 Josephus, *The Embassy to Gaius* (Reader, 165-180).

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### The Occupation of Alcatraz: An Enduring Legacy

By Suzy Babb

In November of 1969 a group of Native Americans landed on Alcatraz Island and remained there for nineteen months.<sup>1</sup> Since then, especially in the wake of the Red Power movements that arose, many people have questioned the extent of the occupation's effect on Native lives and their fight for self-determination. Some make lofty claims of the everlasting influence that Alcatraz had in the lives of Indians and non-Indians alike, while others marginalize the events as having little influence beyond serving as a media attraction. In reality, the significance of the occupation goes far beyond the events that took place on the island. Either directly or indirectly, the occupation of Alcatraz left a legacy that greatly effected the course of further Native American activism, the governmental policies that emerged during the 1970's, and the emergence of a proud, modern Native identity.

In order to understand the legacy of the occupation it is important to understand the circumstances from which it arose and the events that took place while the Island was held by the Tribes of All Nations, as the occupiers called themselves. The decades preceding the occupation served as a catalyst that eventually led to the emergence of an Indian movement in the Bay Area. Most significant was a policy of relocation that was enacted by the federal government in the 1950's, which coincided with the termination policy. Both policies sought to end reservations and tribal sovereignty with the ultimate goal of assimilating Native

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1 "Alcatraz is Not an Island: Timeline." Public Broadcasting Service, <http://www.pbs.org/itvs/alcatrazisnotaniland/timeline.html>

Americans into white society.<sup>2</sup> The relocation policy was severely underfunded. It promised training, job placement, and financial assistance for Natives if they agreed to relocate to urban areas, although it usually fell short on its promises.<sup>3</sup> San Francisco was one of the main sites of relocation, and the failures of the program resulted in a large number of Natives who were impoverished, alienated from their homelands, and subjected to routine racism, including police brutalization.<sup>4</sup> When needs were left unmet by the government program, several groups were formed in the Bay Area to help Indians assist one another, including the American Indian Center in San Francisco, which had been providing “employment, health care and legal assistance, and social programs for the growing number of relocated Indians,” for over a decade.<sup>5</sup> Centers like these would provide the perfect breeding ground for political discussions and the growth of actions for the Native American cause.

On top of this condensed oppression of people from various tribes was the social context of the Civil Rights Movement that heightened the nations awareness of minority issues.<sup>6</sup> This resulted in increased student activism in the Bay Area, as well as the formation of the United Native Americans organization in San Francisco in 1968, an activist group of which many of the first occupiers on Alcatraz claimed membership.<sup>7</sup> By the time of the occupation in 1969, several pickets and protests had already

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2 Dean J Kotlowski, “Alcatraz, Wounded Knee, and beyond: The Nixon and Ford Administrations Respond to Native American Protest,” *The Pacific Historical Review* (2003): 202.

3 Troy Johnson, “The Occupation of Alcatraz Island: Roots of American Indian Activism,” *Wicazo Sa Review* (1994): 65.

4 Ibid, 66.

5 Richard DeLuca, “We Hold the Rock!” *California History* (1983): 12.

6 Steven E Silvern, review of *The Occupation of Alcatraz Island: Indian Self-Determination and the Rise of Indian Activism*, by Troy Johnson. *Professional Geographer* (1998): 273.

7 Jack D Forbes, “Alcatraz: Symbol and Reality,” *California History* (1983): 25.

taken place throughout the Bay Area to call attention to the Native American struggle.<sup>8</sup> It is within this context of heightened sensitivity that the occupation took place, and thus the goals and strategies of the action were shaped by these events, as well as the eventual outcomes. In 1963, Alcatraz was closed as a prison,<sup>9</sup> opening the political debate of what to do with the Island, and even more significantly, freeing it for the future occupation.

There were three separate occupations of Alcatraz Island by Native American groups that took place, the final one being the infamous holding of the Island by the Indians of All Tribes. In March of 1964, five Sioux Indians, who had come to San Francisco via the relocation program, decided to occupy Alcatraz in response to a clause in the 1868 Sioux Treaty that they felt entitled them to any unused federal lands.<sup>10</sup> This claim has been seriously debated. Nonetheless, they landed on the Island and offered to buy it for 47 cents per acre, the approximate price the Natives of California were paid in the 1963 settlement for their claim of 64 million acres.<sup>11</sup> However, this occupation was short lived, with the Sioux leaving the same day they arrived after being confronted by the US Marshals.<sup>12</sup> Despite how marginal this occupation may seem, it greatly influenced the later occupation. While only lasting a day, the occupation was highly publicized to the public, including the individuals who would occupy the Island five years later. In addition, the Indians of All Tribes would make the same offer of purchasing the Island for 47 cents an acre.<sup>13</sup> Thus, the first occupation gave the Island a powerful link to the Indian struggle that the later occupiers would rely on and use as motivation for choosing Alcatraz as an appropriate place to symbolize the Native struggle. This was the beginning of the public association of

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8 Ibid, 24.

9 “Alcatraz Island: History and Culture,” National Park Service, <http://www.nps.gov/alca/historyculture/index.htm>.

10 Richard DeLuca, “We Hold the Rock!” *California History* (1983): 8.

11 Ibid, 7.

12 Ibid, 8.

13 Ibid, 7.



Alcatraz with the Indian movement -- an association that would be strengthened as further events developed.

As the debate continued about what should become of Alcatraz, Native American discontent grew and activism started taking place. According to one of the main occupiers of 1969, Richard Oakes, the members of the American Indian Center had made tentative plans to occupy Alcatraz in the summer of 1970 to bring attention to the plight of natives.<sup>14</sup> However, when the Center burned down in 1969, the plans to occupy the Island were accelerated, due to the newly developed void of a central place to meet, organize, and help one another.<sup>15</sup> On November 9th, a group of Natives decided to circle the Island on a boat with the stated purpose of making the public aware of native issues.<sup>16</sup> However, Oates and four others decided to jump off the boat and swim to the island, only staying for the night, but promising news reporters that they would return.<sup>17</sup>

Before examining the third and final occupation, it would be helpful to look at the symbolism that Alcatraz provided and why it was chosen to highlight the native struggle, beyond its convenience of being close and uninhabited. As Brad Lookingbill points out, Alcatraz “represented an act of social protest and political theater.”<sup>18</sup> The Island had already received so much popular attention in years immediately preceding the occupation. It had such a famous legacy for its housing of the notorious prison that any action there was bound to draw large amounts of attention. In addition, the Native occupiers saw the harsh conditions of the island as representative of the conditions found on most reservations:

“It is isolated from modern facilities, and without adequate means of transportation.

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14 Ibid, 12.

15 Ibid, 12.

16 Ibid, 13.

17 Ibid, 14.

18 Brad Lookingbill, review of *The Occupation of Alcatraz Island: Indian Self-Determination and the Rise of Indian Activism*, by Troy Johnson. *American Indian Quarterly* (1998): 106.

It has no fresh running water.

It has inadequate sanitation facilities.

There are no oil or mineral rights.

This is no industry so unemployment is very great.

There are no health care facilities.

The soil is very rocky and non-productive; and the land does not support game.

There are no educational facilities.

The population has always exceeded the land base.

The population has always been held as prisoners and kept dependent on others.”<sup>19</sup>

The occupiers saw this seemingly inhospitable place as a visual representation of their struggles and the cruelties of their lives. They linked the ability to remake Alcatraz into a livable place to their ability to better Indian lives and remake Indian identity into one of dignity and pride rather than assimilation and shame. As one occupier commented, “we will not ever get anything till we remake Alcatraz.”<sup>20</sup> Thus, the choosing of Alcatraz as the site to occupy was deliberate and specific. It symbolically brought to the public mind a visual with which they could identify Native issues. It enabled the public to gain a deeper understanding of what the Indian struggle was (against poverty, prejudice, assimilation, and control by non-native entities) and why it was so vital that it be won (otherwise Native identity and culture would be lost to the assimilationist forces). Through the choosing of Alcatraz, the Indians of All Nations were able to identify and associate their struggle with a mass that had already captured the interests of the public for decades. Thus, the movement gained more publicity than it may have if located elsewhere and was able to leave a lasting impression on native and non-native minds, keeping the ideology and remembrance of their struggle alive for decades to come.

The third occupation, taking place a few days after the second occupation on November 21st, would prove to be the

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19 Tina Loo and Carolyn Strange, “Holding the Rock: The “Indianization” of Alcatraz Island, 1969-1999,” *The Public Historian* (2001) : 60.

20 Tina Loo and Carolyn Strange, 60.

longest lasting, receive the greatest amount of publicity, and maintain the most significant legacy. When they first landed, the Indians of All Tribes numbered 80 individuals, but a mere month later, they numbered over 200.<sup>21</sup> These people, the majority of which were college students from the Bay Area, were looking to make Alcatraz their home for an indefinite amount of time and set about ordering their daily lives, bringing their families and setting up schools, a radio program, and a council of leadership.<sup>22</sup> The occupation immediately drew public attention, and the occupiers issued a set of demands, among which was the release of Alcatraz to the Indians of All Tribes, and the creation of a university and cultural center on the island using government funding, but not government interference.<sup>23</sup> As Donna Hightower Langston reports, as many as 56,000 Indians took part in the occupation, either as occupiers, visitors, or those who sent assistance to keep the occupation going until the demands were met.<sup>24</sup> In the beginning, life on the island ran smoothly, “everyone on the island had a job ... and all decisions were made by unanimous consent of the people.”<sup>25</sup> The government responded to the occupation with a policy of non-action, waiting for the occupation to fade out. It had suffered too many embarrassments and too much popular disapproval in recent history, especially regarding its involvement in the Vietnam war, the My Lai Massacre, and the killings at Kent State University, to risk another public relations debacle.<sup>26</sup>

The policy proved to pay off, for by the end of the occupation, internal factions, drug use, and several deaths on the island had all compounded to create disorder and dwindling numbers on the island.<sup>27</sup> In 1971, it appeared the island had

21 Richard Brooks, “What Tribe? Whose Island?” *The North American Review* (1970): 51.

22 Ibid, 51.

23 DeLuca, 15.

24 Donna Hightower Langston, “American Indian Women’s Activism in the 1960s and 1970s,” *Hypatia* (2003): 119.

25 Johnson, 69.

26 Johnson, 71.

27 Robert Warrior, review of *The Occupation of Alcatraz*

reverted to chaos. The government had cut off water and electricity to the island and several fires broke out on the island with the suspicion of arson.<sup>28</sup> The Egalitarian nature of the occupiers had produced no central leadership with which the government could negotiate and by 1970, all negotiations had stopped.<sup>29</sup> When the government eventually sent armed officials to remove the remaining occupiers in June 1971, there were only 15 people remaining.<sup>30</sup> They were removed peacefully and the occupation ended.

If one looks at the legacy of Alcatraz in terms of which of demands were realized, then the occupation will surely be viewed as a failure. The Indians of All Tribes did not receive the title to Alcatraz Island, the government did not agree to their demanded funding, and no university, museum, or cultural center was ever placed on the island. When the last of the occupiers left, the land was turned over to the National Park Service and plans were implemented to turn the Island into a state park.<sup>31</sup> Thus, it is easy to look at the successes of the occupation as nonexistent since none of the formal goals were realized. However, in reality, the implications and reverberations of the Alcatraz occupation extended far beyond their small, admittedly limited list of demands. As Johnson notes, “the underlying goal of the Indians on Alcatraz Island was to awaken the American public to the plight of the first Americans, to the suffering caused by the federal government’s broken treaties and broken promises, and to the need for Indian self-determination. In this the occupiers were extremely successful.”<sup>32</sup>

To begin with, the occupation of Alcatraz had a significant

*Island: Indian Self-Determination and the Rise of Indian Activism*, by Troy Johnson. *The Oral History Review* (1999): 142.

28 Johnson, 73.

29 Johnson, 73.

30 Johnson, 74.

31 Tina Loo and Carolyn Strange, 63.

32 Troy Johnson, “The Occupation of Alcatraz,” *Indigenous People of Africa and America Magazine*. Internet, Ink and Film Productions, LLC, [http://ipoaa.com/alcatraz\\_occupation.htm](http://ipoaa.com/alcatraz_occupation.htm).

impact on the shape the Red Power movement took. From among the ranks of the occupiers came individuals who went on to be active in modes of protest as diverse as the sit-ins adopted by those struggling for fishing rights in the Pacific North West, the militancy of the newly formed American Indian Movement, and the lobbying practiced by the National Congress of American Indians.<sup>33</sup> While the occupation at Alcatraz had fallen apart, largely due to the disjunction of its membership, those present represented a wide array of skills, talents, and temperaments, each of which was strengthened by the experiences of Alcatraz. These diverse individuals were able to learn from the mistakes made on the Island and were able to continue in the struggle with better knowledge of how to accomplish their goals. It was precisely this variation among the individuals at Alcatraz that allowed the movement to carry on with the dynamism necessary to exact large amounts of change.

In addition, the occupation marked a specific shift in native organizing from being locally and tribally centered to being a mass, multi-tribal movement.<sup>34</sup> Before Alcatraz, Indian activism had always arisen at the tribal level, as a response to perceived wrongs enacted against a specific tribe. Rarely were they supported by other tribes or fought for the issues facing all Natives.<sup>35</sup> For the first time in history, largely as a result of the relocation program, Native people from various tribes were brought together as individuals, not tribal communities, and were left to interact with one another. This opened the way for the shared bond of pan-Indianism and for the recognition of the common hardships facing all Natives beyond tribal barriers. Out of these close encounters, Indians formed bonds that would shape the future of their activism in America until the present. This pan-tribal activism was first expressed in the occupation of Alcatraz. Thus, the Island served as the example for other activists to follow, which they did.

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33 Ward Churchill, review of *The Occupation of Alcatraz Island: Indian Self-Determination and the Rise of Indian Activism*, by Troy Johnson. *Journal of American History* (1997): 1153.

34 Troy Johnson.

35 Forbes, 24.

The occupation also set the precedent for other occupations by Native groups eager to call attention to Indian suffering. The occupation of the Washington DC Bureau of Indian Affairs in 1972 and the armed occupation of Wounded Knee in 1973 are probably the most famous. Many who had participated in either occupation held membership at the Alcatraz incident.<sup>36</sup> However, it must be noted that there was an explosion of occupations across the country by Native Americans, with at least 20 taking place while Alcatraz was still in effect and an estimated 50 more after Alcatraz ended.<sup>37</sup> Clearly, Native Americans across the country turned to the occupation of Alcatraz as an example to follow in effective activism. Alcatraz, as will be discussed later, was successful not only in bringing about change in Indian National policy, but also served as a driving force in the creation of Native pride that undoubtedly inspired others to be active in the movement and to identify themselves with the Indian cause. They now saw occupation as a viable means of getting the publicity needed to gain public sympathy, pressure those in power, and to bring about positive change.

The occupation of Alcatraz also allowed for the creation of the group that would lead Indian activism after the end of Alcatraz, the American Indian Movement (AIM). Through the government's inaction at Alcatraz, AIM was able to realize the need for continued militancy if their goals were to be realized.<sup>38</sup> This intense militancy was to define the Red Power movement throughout the 1970's, as evidenced in the armed stand off at Wounded Knee.

Alcatraz served as a catalyst of Native action that led many of the participants and observers to fight, quite successfully, for a more Indian-appropriate education. Harkening back to the Indians of All Tribes Proclamation that called for greater cultural awareness on behalf of Natives,<sup>39</sup> the aftermath of Alcatraz groups were successful in establishing numerous academic goals. Over one hundred American Indian studies programs at universities

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36 Johnson, 63.

37 Ibid, 74-75.

38 Ibid, 75.

39 DeLuca, 15.

across the nation, almost two dozen community colleges on reservations, and through an occupation of unused federal land, by many who had been at Alcatraz, the first Indian university, Denaawide-Quetzalcoatl University were created.<sup>40</sup> The presence of Alcatraz in these successes abounds. It has continued to linger in the Native activist's memory and to serve as an inspiration for actions and struggles. While the occupation of Alcatraz in and of itself had limited success, its true success, the triumph of its legacy and its ability to inspire native peoples, is obvious in events like these.

The Island itself has maintained a legacy as a symbol for activism, a remembrance of Native struggle, and thus a source of continual motivation. Since the occupation began the Island has continuously served as a rallying point for Indian activism. In 1978, the Island was the starting point for the 'Longest Walk' to the Nation's capitol in response to the continued mistreatment of Native people.<sup>41</sup> It served the same function in the 1994 'Walk for Justice' to protest the ongoing imprisonment of an AIM leader since 1975.<sup>42</sup> The Island is occupied every year on Thanksgiving by hundreds of Native Americans in an UnThanksgiving ceremony, where they mourn the tragedies that have befallen Indians throughout history, but also remember the occupation and the optimism provided by communal actions.<sup>43</sup> Every year, Alcatraz becomes a symbol of hope in the persisting struggle of Native people. The advancements for Indians that were brought about as a result of the Island's occupation have transformed a place that was once only representative of tragedy and cruelty into a promise of possibility and rallying point for many Natives. It is a place that they look to for strength in their fight for Native justice. Few sites have had such a transformative meaning, and have persisted to stand as a locale for gathering, despite its multiplicity of symbolic associations.

The occupation began the same year that Nixon took

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40 Tina Loo and Carolyn Strange, 69.

41 Johnson, 77.

42 Ibid, 77.

43 Tina Loo and Carolyn Strange, 70.

the office of president. This was at a time of heightened Indian activism, the zenith of which was the occupation at Alcatraz. Thus, the President and his administration were forced to face the ever-present "Indian question" of how to respond to the demands of self-determination. The most successful and pronounced evidence of the long-term success of the occupation came in the form of Nixon's declaration to end the termination policy of the 1950's and implement a self-determination policy for Native Americans.<sup>44</sup> As a result of the policies that were to be passed from 1970 to 1971, the Bureau of Indian Affairs budget was increased two hundred and twenty five percent. The funds for Indian health care were doubled, the office of Indian Water Rights was created, and scholarships for Native American college students were increased by \$848,000, all in an attempt to increase Native sustainability and self-rule.<sup>45</sup> The laws passed during this time gave tribes, by way of a majority vote, full control of federally sponsored Indian programs.<sup>46</sup> However, some individuals, such as Russell Means, the leader of the American Indian Movement, argued that the increased funding of programs like the much hated Bureau of Indian Affairs was "intended to bolster rather than dismantle the whole structure of BIA colonialism," which had exercised much power over tribal affairs up to this point.<sup>47</sup> Nonetheless, it can't be denied that under Nixon the policy of termination, which would have proved detrimental to tribal self-determination, was reversed and the tribes were recognized as the primary association of Natives. The level of authority tribes were given in the running of federally funded programs was unprecedented. Thus, Natives made huge strides in the area of self-determination under the Nixon administration, even if issues still remained. Beyond the domestic gains that Indians made during this period, they also made progress globally. In the early 1980's the United Nations recognized the existence of an

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44 Kotlowski, 209.

45 "Alcatraz is Not an Island: Indian Activism." Public Broadcasting Service, <http://www.pbs.org/itvs/alcatrazisnotaniland/activism.html>.

46 Kotlowski, 208.

47 Ibid, 203.



international indigenous rights movement.<sup>48</sup> Alcatraz was largely responsible for these successes. It put the problems facing Native Americans at the forefront of policy issues and at the center of public attention. Through the publicity received at Alcatraz and at the later movements inspired by Alcatraz, the federal government was forced to take an active approach to the discontent of Indians, resulting in the policies that assisted Natives in their quest for self-rule.

The final legacy left by the Alcatraz occupation was the effect it had on Native American individuals who, in mass, began to re-recognize themselves as Indians and saw their heritage as a source of pride. From 1960 to 1990 the census recorded an increase in the number of people who identified themselves as Native Americans from 523,591 to 1,878,285, even though the Native population was actually in decline.<sup>49</sup> M.E. Kelley and Joane Nagel conclude that the increase in identification sprang from the movement prompted by the occupation of Alcatraz, which made Native people aware of the Indian struggle and instilled in them a sense of pride that had been suppressed under the assimilationist policies of the federal government.<sup>50</sup> As one Native American reported:

“The Alcatraz takeover had an enormous impact ... For the first time in my life I was proud to be an Indian. I grew up in an all white area. It was very difficult. You were constantly struggling to maintain any kind of positive feeling, any kind of dignity, Alcatraz changed all that.”<sup>51</sup>

Nagel similarly relates how the power that the occupation held inspired the resurgence of Native Pride in not only the Indians who participated at Alcatraz, but those from throughout the country, many who witnessed Natives asserting their identities as Indians for the first time (958).<sup>52</sup> This proved to be an extremely

48 “Alcatraz is not an Island: Indian Activism.”

49 Mary E. Kelley and Joane Nagel, “Ethnic re-Identification: Lithuanian Americans and Native Americans.” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* (2002): 278.

50 Ibid, 280.

51 Ibid, 281.

52 Joane Nagel, “American Indian Ethnic Renewal: Politics

impacting message that made many Native individuals comfortable calling themselves Native. Beyond this, many were made aware of the wide scope and commonalities of the Indian struggle across the nation, among all tribes. Thus, the publicity that the occupation and later actions received not only allowed them to realize their Native heritage, but also to join the fight for the Indian cause.

Others have expressed similar conclusions about the lasting effect that the occupation had on the cultural memory and conscience of Native Americans. In the aftermath of Alcatraz, Natives began to revive their cultural traditions, teaching them to other tribal members so they could be passed on to future generations.<sup>53</sup> In speculating what the outcome for the future of Natives would have been without Alcatraz, former Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Robert Bennet claims that “there was a real danger that all would have been lost ... it also helped awaken Indian tribes from their complacency.”<sup>54</sup> For the first time Natives were gathering on a national scale and asserting themselves and their rights as Indians, distinct from white culture, but still deserving the rights to make decisions for themselves and to determine their futures. Up to this point tribes had been marginalized in their efforts because of their limited and inward scopes. Their awakening to the inter-tribal character of their suffering gave their movement much more power.

The occupation of Alcatraz “challenged cultural depictions of Indians as victims of history, as living relics, powerless, and subjugated.”<sup>55</sup> This challenging of popular conceptions paved the way for Natives to be proud of themselves and find dignity in their ancestral history. The resurgence of Native pride has proven to be the most enduring legacy of the occupation. It persists today in the minds of those who were active at Alcatraz and has been passed on

and the Resurgence of Identity,” *American Sociological Review* (1995): 958.

53 Jose Ignacio Rivera, review of *Alcatraz! Alcatraz! The Indian Occupation of 1969-1971*, by Adam Fortunate Eagle. *California History* (1993): 378.

54 Ibid, 379.

55 Nagel, 958.

to Natives who weren't. Even for those who know little or nothing about the occupation, the pride that emanated from Alcatraz is evidenced by the emergence of an increased attention to cultural practices and preservation. Many Natives are no longer content to forget their past, becoming part of homogenous America. Instead, they are proud of their distinction as Indians and are working to ensure that this proud differentiation endures.

However, some have suggested that the legacy of the occupation has been inflated and in actuality is really limited. Vine Deloria Jr. argues that because the Indians of All Tribes failed to issue a strict and concise list of what they wanted accomplished, what policies they wanted implemented, and what specific changes they wanted on behalf of all Native Americans, their success was by nature limited. While the occupiers did issue a proclamation on their demands, these were specific to the island and largely neglected the larger issues of native struggle. Deloria claims that because they wanted change and neglected to put forth what exactly that change would look like, they were unable to realize any substantial changes as a result of the occupation.<sup>56</sup> However, when looking at the indirect influence that the occupation had on policy making, it can be seen that even though the occupiers lacked concrete demands, they were still able to get much beneficial legislation passed.

Others, like Linda Boyer, assert that the changes resulting from Alcatraz didn't go far enough. She argues because there is still rampant poverty, no constitutional recognition (because of their status as political entities), and the struggle for religious freedom, that the legacy of Alcatraz hasn't gone far enough and that it has fallen short of completing its intended goal of Indian self-determination.<sup>57</sup> Interestingly enough, she argues that she is

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56 Vine Deloria Jr. "Alcatraz, Activism, and Accommodation," in *American Indian Activism: Alcatraz to the Longest Walk*, ed. Troy Johnson, Joane Nagel, and Duane Champagne. (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), 47.

57 Linda Boyer, "Reflections of Alcatraz," in *American Indian Activism: Alcatraz to the Longest Walk*, ed. Troy Johnson, Joane Nagel, and Duane Champagne. (Los Angeles: University of

glad that the Indians of All Tribes failed to gain Alcatraz, using the logic that if they had won that struggle, the government would have been less receptive to meeting further demands and Natives may have become complacent in their fight for self-determination<sup>58</sup> -- a fight she clearly sees as an ongoing necessity. While the occupation of Alcatraz and the activism that ensued was admittedly unsuccessful in eradicating all issues pertaining to Indians, it was able to put the struggle in motion. Much has been accomplished since the occupation and the legacy of Alcatraz has provided the momentum for those, like Boyer, who see the struggle as continuing to this day. What it means to be Native is still up for debate, and the struggle of tribes to improve their people's lot is still in effect.

Still others simply make the claim that "it seems very unlikely that the occupation of Alcatraz led to any marked change in the general direction of the Indian movement," and that instead it "may have encouraged some Indian activists to become enamored of staging media events as opposed to the harder task of long range and careful organizing."<sup>59</sup> The claim that the occupation had little effect on the direction of the movement is unfounded in that it ignores the exponential growth of occupations by Native people, which had been practically nonexistent before Alcatraz. In addition, this statement marginalizes the profound effect that the media and publicity of such actions can have on those watching. Media coverage was not necessarily negative as it brought both Natives and non-Natives from across the country into what was happening at Alcatraz, enabling the spread of public sympathy for the movement along with the increased sense of pride among Indians.

The occupation of Alcatraz was significant on many levels and has effected the Native experience in America continuously since it began in 1969. The activism that it inspired has left a lasting memory of Native courage that Indians today can be proud of. The policies that were enacted as a result of the occupation

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California Press, 1994), 100.

58 Ibid, 99.

59 Forbes, 25.

continue to be in effect, shaping tribal policy and Indian lives. The reemergence of ethnic identification and dignity felt by Natives toward their heritage continues to persist as tribes again and again assert their distinct identities as Native people. The occupation of Alcatraz changed the entire scope of what it means to be an American Indian. From 1969 onward, the Native American culture has been directly and indirectly shaped by the events that took place during the nineteen months that the Indians of All Tribes spent on Alcatraz Island.

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## Story of an American Nymphomaniac

By Morgan Lewis

In 1857 John Tomkins Walton, M.D wrote, "Case of Nymphomania Successfully Treated," for *The American Journal of The Medical Sciences*. His article purportedly describes the treatment of a young woman, Catherine, who Dr. Walton diagnoses with nymphomania. To a modern audience, it may read more like a case study on sex, class, and race politics in mid-nineteenth century America. Catherine, a working class, racially ambiguous, sexually passionate and possibly ill woman, is never allowed to speak for herself. Rather, her condition is reported from the supposedly objective and scientific perspective of a white, middle class, male doctor. This essay begins with an analysis of how popular assumptions about sexuality, race, and class collude to portray Catherine as a nymphomaniac. While Dr. Walton only looks at Catherine, this analysis will consider how both Catherine's and Dr. Walton's positionalities are relevant to a deeper understanding of nymphomania. Particular attention is given to situating these positionalities and their relationships in the social history of the 1850s. Secondly, this essay examines the meaning behind Dr. Walton's constant oscillation between treating female sexuality as a disease or as a moral affliction.

In the 1850s, the United States began to undergo a series of major, and for many, frightening changes. Industrialization, immigration, migration and urbanization, as well as the ascent of a growing middle class, challenged societal norms. Modern science, then a newly emerging and barely coherent field, sought to establish its authority by explaining and categorizing all aspects of society from race, to class difference, to gender. Invariably, as is

apparent in the work of Dr. Walton, science and medicine usually worked to support and naturalize existing social assumptions and hierarchies of power.

After describing Catherine's first "episode," Dr. Walton carefully describes her appearances in sexualized and racialized terms. He begins with the subjective observations that she possessed "an ingenuous countenance and pleasing deportment."<sup>1</sup> This seemingly irrelevant information attests to the voyeurism that pervaded medical literature on nymphomania and other similarly treated women's diseases, such as hysteria. The influential French neurologist, Charcot, held public demonstrations of hysteria in women that were attended only by men. These men observed, "in pornographic detail the role of the vulva and clitoris in the causation of hysterical attacks" (which could be anything from an orgasm to a seizure) "in...young, and...attractive patients."<sup>2</sup> Dr. Walton likely attended similar demonstrations while in medical school. The element of male fantasy again appears when Dr. Walton claims that his presence "increased the energy of her convulsions" and lust.<sup>3</sup> Dr. Walton does not relay how he could know what the relative intensity of Catherine's paroxysms had been before he entered the room. It is almost impossible to accept this male doctor's depiction of female sexuality, when his own sexual desire is so present, and yet un-interrogated. How "lascivious" was Catherine's "leer," during her paroxysms?<sup>4</sup> Was it an "insanity of lust" that "disfigured her face?"<sup>5</sup> Dr. Walton's desire could have caused him to exaggerate the sexual nature of Catherine's suffering. Or perhaps his fear of a sexually passionate woman caused him to exaggerate the intensity of her condition by referring to her

1 John Tomkins Walton M.D., "ART. VI- Case of Nymphomania Successfully Treated," *The American Journal of the Medical Sciences*, (1857): 48.

2 John Studd and Annelieses Schwenkhagen, "The Historical Response to Female Sexuality," *Maturitas*, 63 (2009) 108.

3 Walton., 47.

4 Ibid., 47.

5 Ibid.

"fits" as "peculiar and revolting."<sup>6</sup> There is no way for us to know. Victorian medical beliefs did not see male sexuality as abnormal or as capable of influencing man's rational capacities. Only female sexuality was de-naturalized and subjected to medical scrutiny.

While Catherine's appearance is pleasing, it also shows her to be racially inferior. Dr. Walton points out the shape and thickness of Catherine's lips, the size of her skull, as well as her "broad nose and chin." According to Dr. Walton, these characteristics prove that Catherine has a primitive or, "animal organization," which is the "primary cause of the disease."<sup>7</sup> Phrenology and other now discredited fields were popularly used in the mid-nineteenth century to categorize racialized, sexualized and gendered bodies based on the size and shape of various body parts.<sup>8</sup> By invoking existing racist beliefs, Dr. Walton seeks to justify his diagnosis of Catherine. As a result, he is also perpetuating scientific racism, and contributing to the connection between sexual and racial deviance.

Catherine's racial ambiguity would be, in her time, just as frightening as her sexual "abnormality." Evolutionary theory was not to be popularized for another two years (with the publication of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*). However, the growing prevalence of birth control use in white, middle-class families starting in the 1830s juxtaposed with the growing size of immigrant populations, made the idea of a sexually ravenous, mixed-raced woman seem like a social disaster to the white, middle-class, community for which Dr. Walton was writing in 1857.<sup>9</sup> The significance of racial ambiguity also harkens to fears of miscegenation. Nineteenth century studies of nymphomaniacs stated that this disease could

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid., 47.

8 Siobhan Somerville, "Scientific Racism and the Invention of the Homosexual Body," *The Gender Sexuality Reader*, eds. Roger Lancaster, Micaela di Leonardo (New York: Routledge, 1997), 37-43.

9 John D'Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), 59.

become hereditary.<sup>10</sup> This fear mirrors fears of racial mixing. Anxieties about degeneration through miscegenation were so strong at the time Dr. Walton was writing, that they were institutionalized in the 1850 census. This census was the first to track the number of “mulattos” in the US so as to allow the government to monitor sex between whites and people of color.<sup>11</sup> By making Catherine’s nymphomania a racial-sexual problem, Dr. Walton situates his work within the larger context of the United States’ mission to protect whiteness through controlling intimate relationships.

Dr. Walton identifies Catherine’s working class status as the second most significant cause of her nymphomania. As with her race, Dr. Walton never says outright that he is talking about class, but rather refers to her “mode of life.”<sup>12</sup> Dr. Walton calls Catherine’s, “defective education,” as well as her housing situation, “strong corroborating evidence of the cause of her affliction.”<sup>13</sup> She has experienced the “exposure and contagion incident to several families living in one house, with a hydrant and water-closet shared by all the court.”<sup>14</sup> “Contagion” was a theory linked to the idea of degeneration. It was the fear of the “communication of disease, by touching, from body to body.”<sup>15</sup> Such a theory is emblematic of the “peculiarly Victorian paranoia about boundary order. This theory also legitimized the idea that the close living quarters of impoverished, urban communities were places where diseases, physical and mental, flourished.

While Dr. Walton identifies race, and class as the primary causes of Catherine’s nymphomania, he goes on to “cure” her by treating and subduing her sexuality. Rather than condemning the

10 Carol Groneman, *Nymphomania: a History*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2000), 23.

11 Martha Hodes, “Fractions and Fictions in the United States Census of 1890,” in *Haunted by Empire*, ed. Ann Laura Stoler, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 244.

12 Walton, 47.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

15 Anne McClintock, “The Lay of the Land: Genealogies of Imperialism,” *Imperial Leather*, (New York: Routledge, 1995), 47.

social and economic system, which left Catherine and her mother in poverty, he obsesses over her genitals and the “morality” of her actions. A vaginal examination showed no “morbid condition of the uterus or...lesion in the vagina,” or other evidence of an actual medical problem with Catherine’s genitals.<sup>16</sup> Instead, Dr. Walton cites the “negative evidence as to her virginity,” as proof that she is an “unchaste” “wanton” with a masturbation addiction.<sup>17</sup> Not being a virgin automatically makes unmarried Catherine a moral deviant and a sex addict. Dr. Walton also considers the “mucous coating of the vulva” and the “delicacy of the clitoris” as evidence that Catherine is sick. Catherine had just been caught before the examination “in *coitu*,” by her mother. These symptoms are normal for a woman who was just in the midst of sexual intercourse. Dr. Walton tried to “cure” Catherine by applying a variety of solutions to dissipate and remove the mucous and other signs of sexual excitement. By interpreting the evidence of Catherine’s sexual excitement as signs of nymphomania, Dr. Walton reveals that he considers female sexuality in general to be a disease.

Women in the Victorian era were considered to be completely “passionless,” and only interested in sex for its procreative returns.<sup>18</sup> Thus, a woman like Catherine who has sex for pleasure, was considered diseased, and in need of being rendered “emasculate.”<sup>19</sup> The term “emasculate,” itself reveals the then believed, “unnaturalness” of sexual assertiveness in females. Dr. Walton believes he is taking away a “masculine” quality. One could even go as far as to interpret his obsession with shrinking and desensitizing Catherine’s clitoris as a form of castration. An enlarged “phallic,” clitoris was often cited by sexologists as a sign of sexual degeneracy, lesbianism, or African genes.<sup>20</sup> Such women were believed to be biologically ambiguous and inferior to the white, heterosexual, domestic female.

While it is probably true that Catherine was not a virgin,

16 Walton, 48.

17 Ibid.

18 D’Emilio, 41.

19 Ibid., 50.

20 Somerville, 40-43.

there is no information as to whom she was sleeping with, or if she was sleeping with multiple men.<sup>21</sup> Additionally, Catherine would not admit to masturbating until two months into her treatment, when Dr. Walton “allowed [her] convulsions to have full sway” with the expectation that “fear, [and] agony would prove material aids in the course of treatment.”<sup>22</sup> In other words, Catherine admitted to masturbating when Dr. Walton tortured her by refusing her medical treatment during a paroxysm. Catherine likely had some physical or mental ailment that was causing her to go into fits. Whether or not these had anything to do with her genitals is debatable. In and before the nineteenth century, female sexual organs, particularly the uterus, were believed to be the source of *all* female diseases, both mental and physical.<sup>23</sup>

While it was claimed that nymphomania and hysteria were “new,” and scientifically discovered, they actually have a long history dating back to Hippocratic gynecology (4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.), in which the term “hysteria” first appeared.<sup>24</sup> When the church persecuted witches in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, as a means of spreading its power to the pagan outposts of Europe, “uterine fury” was considered a sign that a woman was a witch.<sup>25</sup> The significance of this long and winding history is to show that despite the claims of nineteenth century doctors, nymphomania had long been a tool to demonize and subjugate female sexuality. Science and modern medicine merely gave new credence to this old idea. All that is truly new in this article is that Dr. Walton wields “nymphomania” not only in its traditional capacity - protecting patriarchy, but to protect racial and class hierarchies as well.

This history also may partially explain why Dr. Walton oscillates inconsistently between treating nymphomania as a disease and as a moral issue, as well as why he calls upon a clergyman to assist in controlling Catherine. Just as Dr. Walton borrows moral

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21 Ibid., 49.

22 Ibid.

23 Groneman, 4.

24 Cristina Mazzoni, *Saint Hysteria*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 7.

25 Ibid., 14.

language, such as “lasciviousness,” “unchaste,” and “wantonness,” to use in his medical literature, he uses medical language to discuss the work of the priest. He describes the priest as healing the “lesion in [Catherine’s] morale.”<sup>26</sup> The way that Dr. Walton treats Catherine’s malady also reveals uneasiness as to whether she is diseased or immoral. When he “allowed her convulsions,” or tortured her, Dr. Walton said that he was waiting for “a full confession.”<sup>27</sup> One does not “confess” to diseases, but to sins. In the mid-nineteenth century, science had yet to usurp religion’s authority to make knowledge claims about the human body and mind. While in many cases science and religion clashed head to head, in this article, the two powers colluded in the oppression of Catherine, and by extension, of female sexuality.

While “Case of Nymphomania Successfully Treated,” presents the nymphomaniac as a deviant from Victorian morals and norms, the analysis in this essay reveals that she is in fact an integral part and reflection of this society. Longstanding fears of female sexuality are redeployed in Dr. Walton’s article to address newer fears of miscegenation, “contagion” in crowded urban environments, and divergence from the increasingly significant “Domestic Ideal.” This analysis has shown that nineteenth century science and medicine were as culturally situated and subjective as contemporary political, economic and social theories. In addition, this essay brings to light the un-interrogated influence of male sexual desire on the construction of female sexuality. As is attested to by the complete absence of Catherine’s voice, this article and other medical literature of its time, allowed men to independently construct the feminine as subordinate, irrational and pathological. While this article addresses the specific case of a single woman, it contributed to the genealogies of racialization, sexualization and gendering which masqueraded as science, even into the twentieth century.

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26 Walton, 48.

27 Ibid., 49.



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### Race and Organized Labor: A Study into the Chicago Stockyard's Unionization Campaign, 1917-1922

By Sarah Cummins

Today, one of the greatest debates among American labor historians focuses on the reasons why America's laborers, in the early twentieth century, failed to organize into a unified working class. Historians examining this period seek to explain the weak political impact of organized labor and attempt to discover why American workers, unlike their European counterparts, did not develop a more uniform working-class consciousness. One argument that has emerged from these debates attributes the relative lack of class solidarity among workers to the heterogeneity of America's laboring population. Historians supporting this view emphasize the distinct racial and ethnic identities of workers that kept them divided. This paper will explore this interpretation, through examining the Chicago stockyards unionization campaign of 1917-1922. During these years, labor leaders directed an intense drive to unionize all stockyard workers. Despite their determined efforts to incorporate African Americans into an interracial union, racial division ended up fragmenting the movement and destroying the campaign. The inability of stockyard workers to bridge the racial divide was visibly demonstrated in the final strike of 1922. The employment of black strikebreakers conspicuously revealed that labor's attempts had been unsuccessful.

This paper will address why labor leaders failed to unionize black workers in this period. Through an exploration of Chicago's post-war black community, it will illustrate how geographic isolation, social and psychological separation, white racism and employer manipulation all contributed to the labor movement's

defeat in organizing black stockyard workers. Also, through analyzing the ambivalent response of African Americans to unions, this paper will demonstrate how black attitudes towards organized labor differed tremendously from those of white workers. African Americans had their own set of aims and priorities which often conflicted with the labor movement. Having faced discrimination and persecution throughout their lives, black workers were more inclined to unite across racial lines than class lines. Black leaders frequently espoused the message that racial advancement took precedence over industrial democracy, and often adopted a pragmatic approach to unions, judging their efficacy on their ability to solve the race problem. The 1919 Race Riot represented a significant turning point in how black workers evaluated unionization as it explicitly revealed that racial antagonisms were too entrenched to be overcome. Overall, African Americans' distinct black consciousness fundamentally undermined the creation of a larger, more inclusive working-class consciousness and the racial barrier that divided laborers proved too strong to be broken down. Racial division, therefore, was a critical factor in the fragmentation of the stockyards workforce, and was an essential cause of the labor movement's eventual collapse.

The Chicago labor movement of 1917-22 is best understood within the context of World War I. During this period the composition of the Chicago's workforce was dramatically transformed as service in the armed forces and reduced immigration from Europe depleted the size of the city's working population. The wartime labor shortage created an abundant supply of jobs, triggering the migration of thousands of blacks out of the South and into northern cities. Statistics from the Chicago Commission on Race Relations reveal that the black population of Chicago more than doubled between 1910 and 1920, from 44,103 at the start of the decade to 109,594 at its end.<sup>1</sup> This great influx of African Americans was of central importance to the labor movement. By 1917 around ten to twelve thousand blacks had entered

1 Chicago Commission on Race Relations, *The Negro in Chicago: A Study of Race Relations and a Race Riot in 1919* (New York: Adorno Press, 1968), 106.

Chicago's stockyards, constituting one quarter of the industry's workforce.<sup>2</sup> The Stockyards Labor Council (SLC) created by the Chicago Federation of Labor (CFL) in 1917, recognized from the outset the imperative of organizing white and black workers into an interracial union. The war had created optimal conditions for the organization of workers, but it had also pushed the issue of race to the forefront, drawing attention to the threat that racial division and hostility posed to the labor movement. The SLC in its attempt to minimize racial conflict undertook concerted efforts to solicit black membership. Labor leaders actively sought the support of institutions and leaders within the black community, and worked hard to follow up reports of racial discrimination.<sup>3</sup> The SLC promoted interracial rallies to foster enthusiasm for black and white solidarity and to encourage the creation of an inclusive working-class consciousness. Jack Johnstone, a spokesperson for the SLC announced at one of these events:

It does me good to see such a checkerboard crowd – by that I mean all of the workers are not standing apart in groups, one race huddled in one bunch, one nationality in another. You are all standing shoulder to shoulder as men, regardless of whether your face is white or black.<sup>4</sup>

Despite its best efforts, the SLC failed to recruit a majority of black workers. Records reveal that the number of unionized blacks never exceeded a third of the total workforce and the figure might even have been as low as one quarter.<sup>5</sup> One way of explaining this limited turnout is through exploring the development of Chicago's post-war black community. The Great Migration accelerated the consolidation of the city's black neighborhood, the Black Belt, into an exclusively African American area. Around ninety percent of Chicago's black population resided in this region.<sup>6</sup> The Black Belt was situated away from the stockyards and

2 James R. Barrett, *Work and Community in the Jungle: Chicago's Packinghouse Workers, 1894-1922* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 190.

3 Ibid., 205.

4 Ibid., 206.

5 Ibid., 204.

6 Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers*

also at a distance from Packingtown, the neighborhood inhabited by European immigrant workers. The geographical isolation of black laborers from the workplace and from the homes of their white colleagues had important consequences for the black community. The forced separation reduced social interaction between the races and contributed to a lack of interracial understanding among black and white workers. This profoundly impeded the development of a broader class consciousness among stockyard laborers. Instead of uniting along class lines, as was the pattern among European workers in Packingtown, African Americans in the Black Belt turned inwards and united along racial lines. Historian Lizabeth Cohen has argued that “because the black community was so removed from the workplace, it was built instead around other common experiences, such as church and leisure activities.”<sup>7</sup> Race, not class, formed the strongest bond among Black Belt residents, contributing to the creation of a distinct black urban culture within the community. The numerous social and cultural differences that divided stockyard workers made the labor movement’s goal of forming an interracial union much more difficult.

The Chicago Commission on Race Relations, in its study of the city’s African American community reported:

attention is called to the peculiar conditions which compel Negroes of the city to develop many of their own institutions and agencies...they have established their own churches, business enterprises, amusement places and newspapers...a compact community with its own fairly definite interests and sentiments has grown up.<sup>8</sup>

The geographical segregation of African Americans in Chicago contributed to the growth of a distinct black social world. As the above report indicates, black Americans created their own institutions and organizations and adopted their own leaders. These establishments constituted the core of the black community and were of central importance to migrants in their adjustment to city life. As

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*in Chicago, 1919-1939* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 34.

7 Ibid., 36.

8 Chicago Commission on Race Relations, *The Negro in Chicago*, 140.

historian James Barrett has explored, the formative experience of black newcomers in Chicago was shaped by black institutions and individuals. Unlike in Packingtown, where new arrivals turned to the union to facilitate assimilation, southern migrants looked to the black community.<sup>9</sup> For this reason black leaders played an instrumental role in influencing the response of African Americans to unionization.

The most important social agency in the black community, and the institution which was most effective in assisting the adjustment of migrants, was the Chicago Urban League. The League generally occupied an ambivalent position towards organized labor. One of its primary tasks was to find employment for black migrants, and for this reason the organization was compelled to stay on good terms with the meatpackers. In addition to this, the League relied on donations from industrialists, giving its leaders another strong reason for not declaring outright support for unions. The organization also rendered many of the labor movement’s services redundant through instructing workers to bring their grievances not to unions but to the League itself. Historian James Grossman has written that “the Urban League...appropriated a crucial function of a trade union, and...did it within a black institutional framework.”<sup>10</sup> Black workers were more inclined to turn to their own organizations than to unfamiliar white unions.

On the whole, the Urban League adopted a pragmatic attitude towards organized labor. The League’s primary concern lay with black workers, and it therefore judged unions upon the benefits membership would bring to the race. A spokesperson testifying before the Chicago Commission on Race Relations illustrated this judgment in his statement, “The League is not opposed to unionism, but is interested primarily in the welfare of colored workers.”<sup>11</sup> Following the 1919 Race Riot, the League’s support for organized labor began to waver and with the onset of the post-war

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9 Barrett, *Work and Community in the Jungle*, 207 and 210.

10 James R. Grossman, *Land of Hope: Chicago, Black Southerners and the Great Migration* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), 240.

11 Barrett, *Work and Community in the Jungle*, 213.



depression, the League realized that its priority of providing black workers with jobs took precedence over everything else. With increasing black unemployment the organization began to advocate the use of black workers as strikebreakers. This demonstrated that in the last analysis, the League's allegiances lay with the packers. It was Chicago's industries, not the labor unions that would provide immediate relief for black workers during economic downturns.<sup>12</sup>

Chicago's all-black Wabash Avenue YMCA was another important institution within the black community, but unlike the Urban League it was resolutely anti-union from the outset. The organization developed close ties with the industrialists and received most of its funding from the packers. According to the Chicago Commission on Race Relations the institution "promoted efficiency and industrial clubs among Negro workers in industrial plants."<sup>13</sup> These were supported and financed by the employers. Historian William Tuttle argues that the YMCA's secretary A.L. Jackson, "was intellectually and emotionally sympathetic to the packers, and decidedly hostile to unions."<sup>14</sup> Another director, George Arthur, frankly admitted that "plant loyalty" was an essential aim of the organization's industrial program.<sup>15</sup> The YMCA's staunchly anti-union position undoubtedly shaped African American workers' response to unions.

Black newspapers provided a further source of guidance within the black community. The most influential newspaper was the *Defender*, which had already gained the loyalty of many migrants before their arrival in Chicago, through its circulation in the south.<sup>16</sup> The *Defender*'s position regarding unionization generally paralleled that of the Urban League. Robert Abbott, the newspa-

12 William M. Tuttle, *Race Riot: Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919* (New York: Atheneum, 1970), 148.

13 Chicago Commission on Race Relations, *The Negro in Chicago*, 148.

14 Tuttle, *Race Riot*, 151.

15 Allan H. Spear, *Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto 1890-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 174.

16 Grossman, *Land of Hope*, 231.

per's editor supported unionization during 1918-20, but drew away from the movement as the post-war depression deepened in 1921.<sup>17</sup> Like the League, the *Defender* adopted a pragmatic approach to organized labor. As historian James Grossman has suggested, "unionization was evaluated on the basis of whether it would 'advance the race'."<sup>18</sup> In 1921-22, with the strike approaching and the depression worsening, the *Defender* reacted opportunistically and began to endorse the use of black laborers as strikebreakers. During the strike the *Defender* announced, "when the smoke of battle is cleared away from the stockyards we hope the packers will be true to their promise and stand by black workers who came to their assistance in a crisis"<sup>19</sup> Black leaders quickly recognized that workers had more to gain through staying loyal to the packers, than through joining unions.

One final, but perhaps most important source of influence in the black community was the black church. Although a few ministers supported unionization, the majority were inclined to agree with AME Bishop Archibald J. Carey who believed that, "the interest of my people lies with the wealth of the nation and with the class of white people who control it."<sup>20</sup> Historian James Barrett explains that black ministers warned their congregations about the dangers of unionism, and preached instead on the benevolence of the packers. Barrett describes how on the Sunday before the strike, unionists investigating the largest churches in the Black Belt, found that in all but one the minister read a letter from the packers urging workers to ignore the call to strike.<sup>21</sup> A black women interviewed by the Chicago Commission on Race Relations summarized the attitude of black ministers. According to the report:

She commented upon the fact that until recently Negro ministers knew very little about unionism, except that employers were opposed to it. This was enough to influence many ministers to urge Negro workers to stay out of labor unions and thus demonstrate their loyalty to employers who had given them a

17 Barrett, *Work and Community in the Jungle*, 213.

18 Grossman, *Land of Hope*, 233.

19 Ibid., 234.

20 Ibid., 230.

21 Barrett, *Work and Community in the Jungle*, 255.

chance in industry.<sup>22</sup>

To conclude, the leaders and institutions that stood at the core of Black Belt had a profound influence on the response of black stockyard workers to unions. Through adopting a pragmatic approach to organized labor, leaders generally ended up steering blacks away from unions. They saw that the opportunity for racial advancement was more likely to come through loyalty to the packers and therefore put the needs of their race in front of the needs of their class.

Having explored how leaders and institutions in the Black Belt responded to organized labor, this paper will now address the reaction of black workers themselves to unions. Many African Americans did not have to look to the advice of community leaders to formulate their opinion of unions. Although some black workers were sympathetic towards organized labor, these tended to be workers who had resided in Chicago for sometime before the war. The majority of black stockyard laborers, however, were southern migrants who had arrived in Chicago as part of the Great Migration. Many of these black workers harbored feelings of distrust towards organized labor and tended to agree with the view of their colleague, that “unions ain’t no good for a colored man.”<sup>23</sup>

Black workers had a multitude of reasons for not supporting unions. Memories of racial hostility, exclusion, and experience with racist southern unions all contributed to a negative impression of organized labor. The Chicago Commission on Race Relations reported that, “Negroes have often expressed themselves as distrustful of unions because prejudice in the unions has denied them equal benefits of membership.”<sup>24</sup> The belief that unions were motivated by self-interest also tended to deter black workers from becoming members. Some workers had experienced being accept-

22 Chicago Commission on Race Relations, *The Negro in Chicago*, 421.

23 Grossman, *Land of Hope*, 223.

24 Chicago Commission on Race Relations, *The Negro in Chicago*, 404.

ed into unions during a strike, only to be rejected at the dispute’s end.<sup>25</sup> Occurrences such as these created a deep sense of betrayal among black workers, leaving them ill-disposed towards organized labor. The Chicago Commission on Race Relations documented that black workers believed unions were “making appeals to them for membership, not out of a spirit of brotherhood, but merely to advance their own purposes.”<sup>26</sup> Historian William Tuttle summed up the prevailing attitude of African American workers towards unions. He explained, “having been barred, segregated and ridiculed, Chicago’s black workers generally could not identify with the labor movement.”<sup>27</sup>

Other black workers responded negatively to the labor movement out of sheer ignorance. Many southern migrants had never confronted unions before and were therefore unfamiliar with the practice. One black migrant commented, “they didn’t have no unions where I come from.” In explaining why he had not joined the union he remarked, “these other folks been here longer than me; they ain’t joined and I reckon they know more about it than me.”<sup>28</sup> A black organizer expressed her disappointment in the response of black workers to unions declaring, “My people...know so little about organized labor that they have had a great fear of it, and for that reason the work of organizing has proceeded more slowly than I anticipated.”<sup>29</sup>

Another factor that kept black workers away from unions was a genuine belief in employer benevolence. Many southern migrants were extremely grateful for the opportunity that packinghouse work provided. Wages were much higher in Chicago’s stockyards than in any employment area available to black men in the South. William Tuttle explains that, “there was a widespread attitude that employers were the black workers’ natural allies.”<sup>30</sup>

25 Tuttle, *Race Riot*, 146.

26 Chicago Commission on Race Relations, *The Negro in Chicago*, 421.

27 Tuttle, *Race Riot*, 145.

28 Grossman, *Land of Hope*, 215.

29 Tuttle, *Race Riot*, 127.

30 Ibid., 150.

“Blacks after all,” he writes, “felt that they had received fair treatment at the hands of Armour, Swift, Sears and other industries.”<sup>31</sup> This sentiment was echoed in the *Defender*, which in one issue wrote, “The name of Armour has always been a sign of justice so far as our race is concerned.”<sup>32</sup> Packers had a longer history of showing kindness towards black workers than unions. When one migrant was approached by a labor organizer and explained the benefits of union membership he responded, “It all sounds pretty good to me, but what does Mr. Armour think about it?”<sup>33</sup> Many black workers felt that their interests were much better represented by the employers than the unions. As one black legislator explained, employers were “more kindly toward colored labor.”<sup>34</sup> Most importantly, however, black workers were simply not prepared to jeopardize their jobs through joining unions.

One black leader that successfully tapped into the widespread feelings of black workers was Richard E. Parker. Parker was strongly opposed to interracial unions and he repeatedly advised black laborers “not to join the white man’s union.”<sup>35</sup> In 1916 Parker created his all-black American Unity Labor Union (AULU). The AULU directly competed with the SLC in its recruitment of migrants and succeeded in confusing the issue of unionism for many of the newcomers.<sup>36</sup> Historian James Barrett explains how the AULU “struck a responsive chord” among black workers in its appeal to “three important elements in the experience of many black workers: a distrust of white unions, an identification of common interests based on race rather than class, and a basic belief in the packers’ benevolence.”<sup>37</sup> For some black workers the AULU appeared to provide the answer to the question of unionization. The AULU’s decision to organize along racial lines appealed

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31 Ibid., 153.

32 Barrett, *Work and Community in the Jungle*, 218.

33 Tuttle, *Race Riot*, 150.

34 Grossman, *Land of Hope*, 217.

35 Chicago Commission on Race Relations, *The Negro in Chicago*, 422.

36 Spear, *Black Chicago*, 162.

37 Barrett, *Work and Community in the Jungle*, 217.

to many African Americans who had a much deeper sense of racial consciousness than class consciousness. Parker’s advertisement slogan, “Get a Square Deal with Your Own Race” attracted black workers, many of whom were hesitant to join interracial unions.<sup>38</sup>

Finally, the prevalence of racial hostility in Chicago convinced many African Americans to stay firmly away from interracial unions. Black workers had for a long time been attacked by white workers because of their identification as strikebreakers. According to William Tuttle “the words ‘Negro’ and ‘scab’ were synonymous in the minds of white stockyard workers.”<sup>39</sup> Blacks were singled out as the enemy of the labor movement. Even union blacks, who were hostile to strikebreaking, were stereotyped and attacked by white workers. The Chicago Commission on Race Relations explained this prejudice, stating, “Circumstances have frequently made Negroes strikebreakers, thus centering upon them as a racial group all the bitterness which the unionist feels towards strikebreakers as a class.”<sup>40</sup> In addition to this, black workers were plagued by Irish street gangs who in this period conducted a “reign of terror” against the black community.<sup>41</sup> Chicago’s racial hostilities were violently exposed in July 1919 when the city exploded into a bloody race riot. This event, more than any other destroyed any hope of organizing black and white workers together.

The 1919 Race Riot represented a significant turning point in the failure of Chicago’s labor leaders to organize black stockyard workers. The incident convinced blacks once and for all to abandon interracial unionization and to concentrate on the more immediate problems inflicting their race. The SLC worked hard to preserve order during the riot but their attempts to curb racism were in vain. Labor issues were central contributors to the hostilities that generated the riot, and forty one percent of the riot’s clashes took place within the stockyards district.<sup>42</sup> Some violent

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38 Ibid., 218.

39 Tuttle, *Race Riot*, 119.

40 Chicago Commission on Race Relations, *The Negro in Chicago*, 404.

41 Barrett, *Work and Community in the Jungle*, 219.

42 Grossman, *Land of Hope*, 222.

outbreaks even took place within the stockyards. The Chicago Commission on Race Relations documented the savage attack of a black employee who was beaten to death with a hammer and a broom by a white mob.<sup>43</sup> When black workers returned to work in August, white unionists walked out. This illustrates how the riot had cemented the barriers that divided black and white workers, smashing any hope of organizing the races together. Historian Allan Spear explains that by the end of 1919, the SLC realized that its drive to organize black workers had failed. The union's secretary admitted, "To be frank we have not had the support from the colored workers which we expected."<sup>44</sup> The Race Riot was undeniably a central factor in retarding unionization. In the wake of the violence, black institutions and leaders began to turn away from organized labor as their suspicions and distrust of white organizations mounted.

The packers themselves made deliberate efforts during the riot to exploit the heightened racial tensions. James Barrett explains that the employers accentuated racial antagonisms through adopting "a conscious corporate strategy to keep the two groups divided and hostile to each other."<sup>45</sup> One tactic they employed was to intentionally portray the riot as a labor conflict in order to discredit the unions. These activities were part of a broader pattern of employer manipulation that aimed to undercut unionism among black workers and inhibit interracial action. Throughout this period, the packers strengthened their hold over the black community through employer paternalism. As we have already seen, many of the institutions and organizations within the Black Belt were financed by industrialists. During the Race Riot the packers came to the aid of the black community offering them emergency assistance. They helped workers return to their jobs, set up temporary pay stations in the Black Belt, and provided food for the community. One black man recollected that, "Armour, Swift sent truck loads of meat into that district, otherwise some of those people would have

43 Chicago Commission on Race Relations, *The Negro in Chicago*, 400.

44 Spear, *Black Chicago*, 163.

45 Barrett, *Work and Community in the Jungle*, 221.

starved."<sup>46</sup> These visible gestures convinced many black workers of the benevolence of the packers and reinforced the loyalty they felt towards their employers.

The packers implemented a variety of other techniques to prohibit the unionization of black workers. Within the plant, employers adopted several methods to keep workers divided. These included providing individual blacks with special treatment, discriminating against union members and verbally and physically intimidating workers who were sympathetic to organized labor.<sup>47</sup> In addition to this, packers made determined efforts to prevent interracial meetings and demonstrations. In July 1919, three weeks before the riot, the packers persuaded the police to prohibit a parade in which white and black workers were to march together. Packers convinced the police that the event would result in a race riot. Unable to cancel the demonstration, the police granted the packers their demand that the two races march separately.<sup>48</sup> The achievement of industrialists to keep employees divided vividly highlights the ultimate failure of the labor movement to bring the races together. As the strike approached, unionists found their ranks severely fragmented and the likelihood of success uncertain.

Chicago's stockyard labor campaign culminated in the final offensive of 1921-22. In the course of the strike Packingtown lined up with the union and the Black Belt with the packers, dramatically revealing the disastrous racial divisions that beset the labor movement.<sup>49</sup> By the time of the strike only 112 black workers remained committed to the union.<sup>50</sup> The majority of black workers heeded the advice of community leaders and took up the role of strike-breakers. The employment of black workers peaked to an all time high in 1922, reflecting not only the successful efforts of packers but also the opportunistic actions of African Americans. Strikes provided black workers with an opportunity for economic advancement which they were not likely to ignore. The industrial secretary

46 Grossman, *Land of Hope*, 223.

47 Barrett, *Work and Community in the Jungle*, 224.

48 Spear, *Black Chicago*, 163.

49 Barrett, *Work and Community in the Jungle*, 263.

50 Cohen, *Making a New Deal*, 45.



of the Urban League explained the condition of black workers stating, "in most instances where he has risen above the ranks of common laborer, the strike has furnished the medium thru which his advancement is accomplished."<sup>51</sup>

White workers and leaders did not understand why black workers assumed the role of strikebreakers, and this was one of the reasons why organized labor failed to win the support of African Americans. They could not comprehend that black workers viewed their jobs in very different ways to white workers. Where white workers saw exploitation, black workers saw progress, and while white workers analyzed their situation in class terms, black workers were more concerned with race. These differences generated a distinct black consciousness among African Americans, which kept them psychologically separated from other workers. Historian James Grossman summarizes the unique position African Americans occupied. He writes:

black workers were different... They had a different history and a different sense of their place in society. Because of that different consciousness, blacks trusted their own institutions and shared with those institutions and race leaders a set of priorities and assumptions unlike those of white workers. They were exploited, they perceived, not because they were workers, but because they were black.<sup>52</sup>

The final strike fundamentally revealed that labor organizers had not been able to bridge the separate social worlds of the stockyard workers. The Black Belt stood apart from Packingtown at the end of the campaign, as it had done at its beginning. For black workers race was the most important issue, and labor's inability to formulate an adequate solution to the city's racial problem caused many African Americans to turn away from unionization. The Chicago Stockyards Campaign provides a vivid example of how the heterogeneity of America's working class impeded the development of a unified class consciousness. Diversity in Chicago was accompanied by racism and discrimination, which forced black workers to unite along racial lines at the expense of class-

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51 Arvarh E. Strickland, *History of the Chicago Urban League* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1966), 73-74.

52 Grossman, *Land of Hope*, 245.

wide solidarity. SLC leader W. Z Foster, following the collapse of the strike, explained to the Chicago Commission on Race Relations the fundamental problem in organizing black workers. He stated:

Race prejudice has everything to do with it. It lies at the bottom. The colored man as a blood race has been oppressed for hundreds of years. The white man has enslaved him, and they don't feel confidence in the trade unions.<sup>53</sup>

A long history of racism in the South, augmented with new incidents of discrimination in the North, strengthened the unique black consciousness of African Americans while severely impeding the creation of a more inclusive class consciousness. Racial division, more than any other factor fragmented Chicago's working class and ultimately led to the collapse of the labor movement's unsuccessful five year campaign.

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53 Chicago Commission on Race Relations, *The Negro in Chicago*, 429.

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