

Recounting the Past

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Recounting the Past

Editors

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Note from the Editor

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Cover photograph: "Pre-election parade for suffrage in NYC, Oct. 23, 1915, in which 20,000 women marched," National Archives, Washington D.C., image LC-USZ-62-50393.

Recounting the Past

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Building the “New Soviet Citizen” from the Ground Up: Primary and Secondary Educational Reform in the Soviet Union from 1958 to 1965

By Kerry Garvey

In a photograph from about sixty years ago, young Soviet students are working hard at learning how to craft wooden furniture. All of the students are fully engaged in their tasks, and many of them have smiles on their faces from sheer enjoyment. This photograph’s caption is “Learning a trade—and boys are doing it gladly because they know that whoever they become when they grow up, it will always come in useful.”¹ Another photograph shows boys happily cleaning the school without any protest. This photograph’s caption states “It isn’t really work—it’s pleasure!”² Both of these photographs are featured in *A Glimpse into a Boarding School* (1958), which provides a unique window into the ideals of the Soviet education system by showing photographs of their students during a typical school day. These photographs illustrate how education has strong ties to life afterwards especially in terms of work ethic. It is significant to note that both images project an idea that Soviet students enjoy the idea of learning how to work and, more important, how to enjoy the work in their lives. These were two important traits of Khrushchev’s version of a model Soviet citizen, which he attempted to embed in the Soviet education system.³

Education has always been viewed as an important tool to build the “new Communist man” in Soviet society; however, many Soviet leaders had failed to build an education system that successfully created the “new man.”⁴ Joseph Stalin attempted to do this by centralizing the entire Soviet education system. His educational reforms focused on creating a uniform system for the Soviet Union that promoted “polytechnical and collectivist” education.⁵ Many

¹ T. Pechernikova, author, and Y. Haldey, photographer, *A Glimpse Into A Boarding School* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1958), n.p.

² Pechernikova, and Haldey *A Glimpse into a Boarding School*, n.p.

³ Gleb Tsipursky, “Conformism and Agency: Model Young Communists and the *Komsomol* Press in the Later Khrushchev Years, 1961-1964,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 65, no. 7 (September 2013): 1396-1397, 1411-1412.

⁴ Elisabeth Koutaissoff, “Secondary Education for All in a Forward-Looking Society,” in *Home, School and Leisure in the Soviet Union*, ed. Jenny Brine, Maureen Perrie and Andrew Sutton (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1980), 73.

⁵ Ben Eklof, “Introduction- Russian Education: The Past in the Present,” in *Educational Reform in Post-Soviet Russia: Legacies and Prospects*, ed. Ben Eklof, Larry E. Holmes, and Vere Kaplan (London and New York: Frank Cass, 2005), 5.

Soviet citizens had the opportunity to receive an education and work at a better job; however, this uniform system also meant that the state decided on the textbooks, curriculum, teaching methods, and students’ careers. This created a Russian-centered curriculum that promoted a distorted ideology to Soviet students.⁶ For example, Stalin’s history textbooks reinforced this ideology by rewriting history with the Party as the leading role of change in the Soviet Union. This historical narrative removed any efforts made by other “leading Bolshevik personalities” prior to Stalin’s rise in power.⁷ Ultimately, this system set high academic standards for students and teachers that they oftentimes failed to achieve. This was due to the centralization of the system, which afforded them little power to change the curriculum – and it did not in fact change until after Stalin’s death.⁸

When Nikita Khrushchev came to power in 1958 as premier of the Soviet Union, he attempted to institute a series of general reforms in order to rectify flaws in the communist system from Stalin’s legacy. A coherent reform plan did not exist across all aspects of Soviet life because of the complexity of trying to fix the faulty system and strict opposition within the Soviet government against changing any current policies. Khrushchev’s “Secret Speech” in 1956 detailed his overarching goal for his reform plans as promoting institutional change in order to create a society of equality and freedom within the framework of communism.⁹ Much of Khrushchev’s plans focused on reforming the economy and political systems in order to decentralize power, which later became parts of de-Stalinization.¹⁰ His plans also partially opened up the Soviet Union by allowing some access to the West.¹¹

Educational reform played a crucial role in Khrushchev’s economic and political reforms because it could help instill his communist ideals in the next generation in order to ensure his reforms would remain strong. He promoted this goal by fostering local initiative within the education system instead of a uniformity across the entirety of the Soviet Union. This paper intends to explore

⁶ Eklof, “Introduction- Russian Education: The Past in the Present,” 4-6.

⁷ David Brandenberger, *Propaganda State in Crisis: Soviet Ideology, Indoctrination, and Terror under Stalin, 1927-1941* (New Haven and London, 2011), 202-209.

⁸ Larry Holmes, “School and Schooling under Stalin, 1931-1953,” in *Educational Reform in Post-Soviet Russia: Legacies and Prospects*, ed. Ben Eklof, Larry E. Holmes, and Vere Kaplan (London and New York: Frank Cass, 2005), 56, 80-81.

⁹ Nikolai Barsukov, “The Rise to Power,” in *Nikita Khrushchev*, ed. William Taubman, Sergei Khrushchev, and Abbott Gleason, trans David Gehrenbeck, Eileen Kane, and Alla Ashenko (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2000), 60-66.

¹⁰ Martin McCauley, *The Khrushchev Era 1953-1964*, Seminar Studies in History (London and New York: Longman, 1995), 91-99.

¹¹ Marvin Perry, et al. *Western Civilization: Ideas, Politics, and Society*, vol. II, 11th ed. (Australia: Cengage Learning, 2014), 842.

how Khrushchev reformed primary and secondary schools, only two parts of the complex Soviet educational system. Under Khrushchev’s educational reforms, primary and secondary schools covered the first eight years of required education by the state, which Soviet children entered at the age of seven and graduated at fifteen or sixteen. The Soviet government intended these eight years of schooling to combine “‘general’ education with production training.”¹² The Soviet system also provided options to go to boarding schools and to continue with higher education or vocational training.¹³ This paper’s focus is on primary and secondary schools because they provide the best indication of how Khrushchev wanted to change basic education for most of the Soviet Union’s population in order for it to align with his version of a communist society. Thus, educational reform of primary and secondary schools showed how far and to what degree the Soviet government was willing to change the basic knowledge of the next generation of Soviet citizens during the Thaw.

Few historians have examined the implications of Khrushchev’s educational reforms, because they did not even start to study his regime until the 1990s and 2000s. This can be attributed to Khrushchev becoming a “non-person” in the Soviet Union after he was overthrown in 1964. He was largely only discussed by Western political scholars in the 1970s; however, many of them only examined his leadership in terms of foreign policy. This did not begin to change until the late 1980s, which was when Soviet citizens began talking about him again with the arrival of *glasnost*’ under Mikhail Gorbachev’s administration. Nevertheless, historians did not begin to address the implications of Khrushchev’s era and his reforms until the 1990s, when they were sparked by the flow of documents from Russian archives.¹⁴ It is important to note that this surge in examination of Khrushchev’s policies left his educational reforms virtually untouched by historians or political scientists alike. This is despite the fact that historians had extensively studied educational systems before Khrushchev.

Most historians of Soviet education studied changes made during Stalin’s regime because a large expansion of the system occurred under his leadership. Their focus is on how Stalin shaped the education system in order to serve the Communist Party’s needs. Larry Holmes is one of the leading

¹² Zeno Bernel Katterle, *Schools in the Soviet: Report of an International Field Study Mission by School Administrators* (Washington: American Association of School Administrators, 1965), 26.

¹³ Katterle, *Schools in the Soviet*, 12.

¹⁴ William Taubman, Sergei Khrushchev, and Abbott Gleason, “Introduction,” in *Nikita Khrushchev*, ed. William Taubman, Sergei Khrushchev, and Abbott Gleason, trans. David Gehrenbeck, Eileen Kane, and Alla Ashenko (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2000), 2-6.

historians on Soviet education and the best example of how it has been treated in the historiography, thus far. He addresses the economic and political implications on Soviet society of Stalin’s centrally controlled education system.¹⁵ He also explores, using a case study of Kirov’s Pedagogical Institute, how the power dynamic worked between the center and periphery to educate the entire Soviet population.¹⁶ The issue of power dynamics in the Soviet education system is a common theme in the historiography on Soviet education. Yet few historians have examined how the education system developed and influenced Soviet society in the Khrushchev era. The historiography for this period is far from being highly developed like for the other decades before it.

The books and articles that cover Khrushchev’s educational reforms were written mostly in the 1980s. The scholars that published them generally analyzed Khrushchev’s reform in the context of the entire Soviet education system from 1920 to 1990 and without any critical analysis of his reforms.¹⁷ For example, Elisabeth Koutaïsoff’s “Secondary Education for all in a Forward-Looking Society” (1980) discussed briefly how Khrushchev’s reforms in 1958 meant simply a change in curriculum from Stalin’s era.¹⁸ Most historians did not change this curriculum-focused approach to Khrushchev’s educational reforms until 2013. For instance, an article published by Gleb Tsipursky that year describes how Khrushchev attempted to build a new model Soviet citizen in the next generation through media and other public spheres, but only briefly mentions the role of education in this endeavor.¹⁹

Such historians have generally failed to examine the significance and impact of education reforms on Soviet citizens, even though the impact of other reforms of the Khrushchev era were well studied. Therefore, there is a large gap in the historiography on the period that needs to be addressed in order to understand fully how Khrushchev attempted to build his “new Soviet citizen” in

¹⁵ For an example of his argument see Larry Holmes, “School and Schooling under Stalin, 1931-1953,” in *Educational Reform in Post-Soviet Russia: Legacies and Prospects*, ed. Ben Eklof, Larry E. Holmes, and Vere Kaplan (London and New York: Frank Cass, 2005). This edited volume also contains several articles on how Stalin’s legacy affected Soviet education until the fall of the Soviet Union.

¹⁶ Larry E. Holmes, *War, Evacuation, and the Exercise of Power: The Center, Periphery, and Kirov’s Pedagogical Institute, 1941-1952* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2012), xvii-xviii.

¹⁷ For an example of Khrushchev’s reforms being examined in the entire historical narrative of Soviet education see Delbert H. Long, *Educational Reform in the Soviet Union* (Buffalo: Comparative Education Center, 1985); and Frank M. Sorrentino and Frances R. Curcio, *Soviet Politics and Education* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1986). For an example of a historian focusing on Khrushchev, see Mervyn Matthews, *Education in the Soviet Union: Policies and Institutions since Stalin* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1982).

¹⁸ Koutaïsoff, “Secondary Education for All in a Forward-Looking Society,” 76-80.

¹⁹ Tsipursky, “Conformism and Agency,” 1401-1402.

the next generation. The impact of his educational reforms is important to study because they affected the knowledge and training of an entire generation of Soviet citizens on a mass scale. His other reforms were only able to impact specific parts of the population, such as intellectuals, writers, and agriculturalists²⁰

I argue that Khrushchev’s educational reform law in 1958 was an attempt to instill new communist ideals in the next generation to ensure the success of his other political and economic reforms, which would finally achieve a working communist system. This required changes in the curriculum, teaching methodology, administration, and infrastructure of schools, which focused on strengthening the ties between the Soviet education system and the advancement of its workforce. More important, these changes promoted local initiative and global awareness of the West in the educational system, which then helped to foster decentralization and liberalism in the Soviet system. The latter supports Khrushchev’s overall intent of promoting “peaceful coexistence” on the international stage through civilized relationships by increasing contact with the West and other foreign nations.²¹

Khrushchev’s educational reform promoted his cause by opening up a communication line between the state and educational officials. The state purposely pursued the advice of teachers and other educational professionals on the educational reforms instead of giving them strict orders to follow as Stalin did. It also focused on the development of a history curriculum that taught the Soviet Union’s and foreign countries’ recent history in order to make for a more globally aware citizen. Ultimately, the Soviet education system did improve enough over the course of the 1950s and 1960s that it caused worry amongst traveling Western scholars. However, there are indications of structural and implementation issues with the reforms that effected the promotion of its new communist ideals.

This paper explores the effects of Khrushchev’s educational reforms by examining articles and editorials published in the Soviet press, Soviet educators’ scholarly articles, and Western scholars’ reports from their fact-finding missions

²⁰ For more information on Khrushchev’s reforms see *Nikita Khrushchev*, eds. William Taubman, Sergei Khrushchev, and Abbott Gleason, trans. David Gehrenbeck, Eileen Kane, and Alla Bashenko (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2000); Polly Jones, ed. *The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization: Negotiating Cultural and Social Change in the Khrushchev Era* (London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Group, 2006); and Robert Hornsby, *Protest, Reform and Repression in Khrushchev’s Soviet Union* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

²¹ Oleg Troyanovsky, “The Making of Soviet Foreign Policy,” in *Nikita Khrushchev*, eds. William Taubman, Sergei Khrushchev, and Abbott Gleason, trans. David Gehrenbeck, Eileen Kane, and Alla Bashenko (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2000), 239-241.

in the Soviet Union. The Soviet press is a particularly important source of information about the Khrushchev era because of how the journalists participate in governmental policies. The two newspapers cited in this paper are *Pravda* and *Izvestia*, which were overseen by the state. *Pravda* was seen as the mouthpiece of the Party, while *Izvestia* was the paper of the Soviet government.²² Journalists acted as almost assistants of the Party because their main purpose was to educate the public on the Party’s policies. However, the press also commonly discussed possible improvements on policies for Soviet society. This means that the press was involved in discussions or negotiations with the government on its reforms and plans even though it was state-controlled media.²³ Therefore, the press under Khrushchev became a stronger public sphere where Soviet citizens could voice their concerns and discuss policy issues. It fostered a debate on the merits and shortcomings of Khrushchev’s educational reforms.

The second source of this paper is articles published by Soviet educators, essentially, propaganda material- though hold truths about how “the system” operated. They provide a different perspective on the educational reforms that the Soviet press would not otherwise have been able to show because they focus on the West’s interpretations of the Soviet education system. Much of the Soviet educators’ articles were intended to participate in this discussion in order to combat rumors in the West and engage in a dialogue about the Soviet education system with the Western academics.²⁴ This source provides some indication on how the Soviet educators thought about their education system, even though most of their articles were focused on explaining the Soviet education system to Westerners. The educators addressed the main criticisms or misconceptions of the West with their personal experiences, which the Soviet press would most likely not discuss in detail.

Western scholars’ work on the Soviet education system is the last source of this paper. Western scholars traveled to the Soviet Union to gain firsthand knowledge of its general education system and discover how it was beating the American system. Most of these trips were funded by the United States’ government after 1957 because of the fear from the Sputnik crisis that

²² Thomas C. Wolfe, *Governing Soviet Journalism: The Press and the Socialist Person After Stalin* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2005), 39-40.

²³ Simon Huxtable, “A Compass in the Sea of Life: Soviet Journalism, the Public, and the Limits of Reform After Stalin, 1953-1968,” (PhD diss., University of London, 2013), 16, 30-33. After the Khrushchev era, the press did not have a strong presence in governmental reform, because journalists’ criticisms were viewed as problematic for the Party. For more information, see Huxtable, “A Compass in the Sea of Life,” 85-95.

²⁴ Helen B. Redl, ed. and trans., “Introduction,” in *Soviet Educators on Soviet Education* (London: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1964), xxvii-xxviii.

the Soviet education system was superior to the American system. This would have meant that the US was losing ground in the Cold War, which it attempted to combat by funding programs for academic subjects like science and math.²⁵ These sources voiced the findings and concerns of Western scholars. Nevertheless, they also provide a basic overview on how the Soviet education system operated, because it was unknown by many in the West due to the lack of information from the Soviet Union prior to 1950. More important, these reports also discussed the criticisms and faults that may not have been in the Soviet press because of the state’s control over the media and its focus on promoting communist ideals.

As the traveling Western scholars’ realized in the 1950s and 1960s, the Soviet educational system cannot be fully understood without a basic overview of its history and traditional place in Soviet society. The first section of this paper therefore provides a brief discussion on how the general educational system developed under the Soviet government and its status at the start of the Khrushchev era. The second section is a brief discussion on the terms and reasoning behind the new educational reform law instituted by Khrushchev in late 1958. This is intended to provide only a basic understanding of how his law intended to reform primary and secondary schools in a six-year time span from 1959 to 1965. The final section has an examination of how the general Soviet public evaluated these educational reforms from 1958 to 1965 in terms of its curriculum, teaching methodology, and relationship to work.

Origins of Khrushchev’s Educational Reform

The Soviet education system under Khrushchev had its roots and foundation in the Stalin era. In the 1930s and 1940s, the Soviet Union was focused on creating a uniform education system for primary and secondary schools in order to ensure that Soviet citizens received the same general education of communist ideals. This was dramatically different from the 1920s system, because it required the government to centralize all control over the education system.²⁶ Stalin saw education as a way to invest in the future and to build communism in the Soviet Union. Therefore, educational standards could

²⁵ Barbara Barksdale Clowse, *Brainpower for the Cold War: The Sputnik Crisis and National Defense Education Act of 1958* (Westport, Connecticut and London, England: Greenwood Press, 1981), 3-4.

²⁶ Holmes, “School and Schooling under Stalin, 1931-1953,” 56-57.

not be left to teachers and other lower officials, because everything needed to be approved by the Party in order to protect the political education of the next generation. Much like Stalin-era policy, in general, his educational standards focused on changing how history was taught in order to support the Party’s political and social ideals, which meant the production training of citizens was secondary under Stalin’s education system.²⁷ Therefore, Khrushchev inherited an education system that focused on the political education of its citizens more than the practical one for work. If this continued, the Soviet Union would eventually lack the necessary skilled workers to operate an efficient and advanced economy, which was only one crisis Khrushchev faced as he came to power.

The entire Soviet system was in political, economic, and social crisis when Stalin died in 1953; however, this does not necessarily mean that the leaders that followed could simply reform the entire system. They had to strike a balance between reform and Stalin’s legacy in order to keep the governmental leaders from losing their power by being excessively questioned about their role in Stalin’s plans. Khrushchev repeatedly attempted to push reforms and changes that he thought would fix the system despite this balance.²⁸ Khrushchev discussed his intent for reforms in his Secret Speech in 1956, which focused on addressing issues with the Stalin cult and its legacy. This speech marked the beginning of “de-Stalinization” during his regime, but created a dilemma for Soviet society with its attempt to blend old ways with new thinking.²⁹ This led to multiple debates about what should be valued in the Soviet system, which spilled over into all sectors of life and, especially, into the Soviet education system. Khrushchev intended to help build Communism by strengthening the ties between life and school in order to have a more practical education and, thus, a trained work force.³⁰ However, he lacked a clear plan for implementation throughout the Soviet Union.

²⁷ Holmes, “School and Schooling under Stalin, 1931-1953,” 59-63.

²⁸ Polly Jones, “Introduction,” in *The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization: Negotiating Cultural and Social Change in the Khrushchev Era*, ed. Polly Jones (London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Group, 2006), 1-2.

²⁹ Jones, “Introduction,” 3-14.

³⁰ William K. Medlin “Soviet Educational Reorganization,” in *Soviet Commitment to Education: Report of the First Official U.S. Education Mission to the U.S.S.R. with an analysis of Recent Educational Reforms*. Bulletin, 1959, No. 16, (Washington: United States Government Printing Office Washington, 1959), 126.

“Law on Strengthening the Ties of School with Life and on the Further Development of the System of Public Education in U.S.S.R” and how it was Implemented

Khrushchev’s plan to reform the entire Soviet educational system was laid out in the “Law on Strengthening the Ties of School with Life and on the Further Development of the System of Public Education in the U.S.S.R,” which was signed into law on December 24, 1958. This law arose after months of debate about the level of practicality needed for Soviet citizens’ education and was meant to be implemented over the course of six years with the intention of building a “new Soviet man” in the next generation.³¹ It included 42 articles that detailed how general, primary-secondary, higher, and vocational education should be reorganized to promote a practical education.³² This law was presented in the press to the Soviet public as a victory for themselves and communism. An article that appeared in the state newspapers *Pravda* and *Izvestia* went so far as to say, “A genuine cultural revolution has been effected in the U.S.S.R.”³³ This article discussed the educational reforms as invoking a Marxist-Leninist worldview, which means the changes fostered the benefits and enjoyment of work in the next generation of young Soviet citizens.³⁴

It is important to note that the state newspapers did not relate the changes to Stalin’s era, but to a time before him in the 1920s. A clear drive to shape the Soviet system around earlier 1920s idealistic communist values and practical work education emerged in Khrushchev’s educational reform. Much of this can be contributed to the shortage of labor from Stalin’s rapid industrialization and population losses from the war. Therefore, workers were made to work long hours, which decreased their drive to work and produce high-quality products. Khrushchev attempted to improve the situation and workers’ moral by offering some work incentives, such as increases in bonuses.³⁵ He did not pursue a general and strong reform plan for the economy to help the labor and production system, because his interest was in the Soviet Union’s political

³¹ Medlin “Soviet Educational Reorganization,” 126; and School Administrators, *Schools in the Soviet* (Washington: American Association of School Administrators, 1965), 13.

³² Medlin “Soviet Educational Reorganization,” 126-27.

³³ “Law on Strengthening Ties Between School and Life and on Further Developing the Public Education System in the U.S.S.R.,” *Pravda* and *Izvestia*, December 25, 1958, 1-2. This newspaper article and all others cited afterwards are taken from the *Current Soviet Digest*. This *Digest* translates selected articles from Russian newspapers into English.

³⁴ “Law on Strengthening Ties Between School and Life.”

³⁵ McCauley, *The Khrushchev Era 1953-1964*, 74-75.

and social issues.³⁶ Therefore, educational reform became an avenue for Khrushchev to pursue an economy reform plan without developing a comprehensive economic plan.

This drive to change the Soviet education system toward more of a practical curriculum already began in 1952, because there was a serious lack of available trained workers to fill jobs after World War II. The inability to meet the new labor demands of a growing economy led to a mandate for educational reform. More important, higher Soviet officials were worried about the younger generation not willing to take up factory work with a sense of enjoyment, pride, and comradeship, which would destroy the foundation of the ideal communist system.³⁷ This meant that the Soviet government and its people saw the need to change Stalin's education system because they recognized it had the fundamental flaw of neither producing enough highly trained workers, nor teaching them to love the idea of work. This failure was attributed to the basic education provided to the Soviet public in primary and secondary schools.

The new law required the establishment of an eight-year unified, compulsory primary-secondary education that focused on a curriculum of "industrial-arts-vocational" training throughout the entire Soviet Union.³⁸ This would encompass all Soviet children starting from the age of seven and ending around 15 or 16.³⁹ If a student completed these years of schooling, their education was known as an "incomplete secondary, general educational, labor, and polytechnical school."⁴⁰ This would give students the basic skills for life and a crucial part of developing the communist system at this stage.⁴¹ Afterward, students could continue their education on a part time basis in order to keep a job and remain in school. The three options of advanced schooling were: schools for young and rural agricultural workers; secondary schools of general labor, and polytechnical education; and technicums and other secondary specialized schools (semi-professional schools). Unlike the primary-secondary schools, there was no specific age range for continuing onto higher education.⁴²

A clear shift was being made in the education system to provide a solid knowledge base in labor and vocational training, which could in theory improve

³⁶ William J. Tompson, "Industrial Management and Economic Reform," in *Nikita Khrushchev*, eds. William Taubman, Sergei Khrushchev, and Abbott Gleason, trans. David Gehrenbeck, Eileen Kane, and Alla Bashenko (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2000), 138-143.

³⁷ Medlin "Soviet Educational Reorganization," 126-27.

³⁸ Medlin "Soviet Educational Reorganization," 128-129.

³⁹ School Administrators, *Schools in the Soviet*, 12.

⁴⁰ Medlin "Soviet Educational Reorganization," 128-129.

⁴¹ School Administrators, *Schools in the Soviet*, 8.

⁴² Medlin "Soviet Educational Reorganization," 129-130.

the entire foundation of the Soviet system by having more people trained for its expanding economy. A debate occurred in the Soviet public about whether or not the new law was being implemented correctly from the vague governmental outline, and able to teach the right communist values to young Soviet citizens. Nevertheless, this debate only became tenser and more cumbersome throughout the implementation of the six-year education plan, because of the sheer logistics and gravity of shifting away from a centralized system completely dependent on the state. Much of educational reform's issues stemmed from Khrushchev's desire to decentralize power, because the teachers and other educational officials waited for the state to provide the materials to teach Soviet students.⁴³ This led to confusion among local officials about how to proceed with the changes, which meant most of the new changes took time to institute until the state provided more than an outline for the new curriculum.

Much of the curriculum changes instituted by the educational reform law focused on providing skilled and trained labor for the growing Soviet economy, which can be attributed to the government's desire to resolve the system's labor problems. The Soviet Union had a difficult time motivating workers to perform their jobs in order to have a functioning economy.⁴⁴ For instance, the reform laws were intended to provide students with the love of work, which would motivate them to produce. It was still commonly thought that young students could be molded into perfect workers and, thus, loyal Soviet workers. The amount of changes made to the curriculum is reflective of the larger debate in the Soviet government about how far they could go in recognizing the faults within the communist system, while still maintaining its legitimacy on the world stage and among the Soviet public.⁴⁵

The Soviet government attempted to provide the new material in the most positive light possible when the "new study plans" or curriculum were distributed in the summer of 1959. An article from the state newspaper *Pravda* described one benefit of the law, stating "students' participation in production work will afford the school greater opportunities for character-building and enrich the context of education."⁴⁶ It was reinforced by the long discussion on how more school time would be allotted to production lessons. The article also revealed that grades five through eight would have 895 hours allotted for work

⁴³This most likely connected to Khrushchev economic policy at the time. He attempted to decentralize the main states' power over the economy. See Tompson, "Industrial Management and Economic Reform," 138-159.

⁴⁴McCauley, *The Khrushchev Era 1953-1964*, 74-75.

⁴⁵Jones, "Introduction," 8-14.

⁴⁶M. Kolmakova, "School on New Path: Concerning Draft Study Plans and Programs of Public Schools," *Pravda*, May 20, 1959, 4.

lessons instead of 538. The article also stated that it was trying to “reduce the students’ study load somewhat, mainly by eliminating secondary material from the study programs, [and] improving teaching.”⁴⁷ This meant teachers needed to be retrained and provided with new teaching material in order to make corrections and changes to their teaching methodology. This was especially true for the veteran teachers, because most likely they were taught under the Stalin regime, which did not focus on a practical education or global awareness. However, this article had little discussion about how the teachers would improve and change the curriculum for Soviet students. The visiting American scholars also noted that the law lacked specific details on how the changes should occur.⁴⁸

The difficulties faced by teachers trying to implement the new education plan remained the entirety of the six-year education plan. Articles appeared in the press that discussed how the state failed to provide materials for teachers to make a successful switch to the new system. Case in point, a group of Russian teachers wrote a letter to the editor of *Pravda* in May of 1959 that described their huge difficulties trying to accomplish this “creative task unparalleled in scope.”⁴⁹ Their main complaint was that teachers did not have the correct teaching methods in order to combine the basic school subjects, such as natural science, with production training. Later in this letter, the teachers explained that the Russian Academy of Pedagogy was expected to provide materials to teachers in order to bridge the gap between the system, but has generally failed to give any direction. The authors of the letter suggested that the Academy open up a completely separate institute, which would deal with incorporating production training into the economy.⁵⁰ The Academy’s purpose was to inform teachers and the public about educational developments, to perform educational research, and to train teachers.⁵¹ It made sense for the teachers to turn toward it for help. However, an issue clearly existed within the state’s and academy’s preparations for the changes in education.

This letter was highly critical of the central operations of the education system, which showed a crucial “crack” in Khrushchev’s reform plans. The teachers did not have the proper guidance or material to teach students, a fact that the Academy did not ignore in a follow up letter published about a month

⁴⁷ Kolmakova, “School on New Path.”

⁴⁸ Medlin “Soviet Educational Reorganization,” 132.

⁴⁹ G. Gugin, S. Molodensky, N. Nikiforov, “Letter to the Editor: What We Expect from the Academy of Pedagogy,” *Pravda*, May 26, 1959, 4.

⁵⁰ G. Gugin, S. Molodensky, N. Nikiforov, “Letter to the Editor.”

⁵¹ William K. Medlin, “Soviet Pedagogical Academy and the New School Plans,” *Comparative Education Review* 2, no. 2 (October 1958): 13.

after the teachers' letter was published. The follow-up letter acknowledged that the teachers' complaints were correct and valid. In its defense, the Academy stated that a plan was beginning to implement the necessary research in order to provide teachers with some guidance on how to change their teaching methodology. The follow-up article did not mention when these documents would be published and classes made possible to instruct teachers.⁵² This shows how much locals were still looking for the state to take the lead. This issue of guidance from the center did not go away during the six-year plan; in fact, it actually became worse over time.

This was reinforced by another article published two years later in *Izvestia* that described how the Party Central Committee failed to provide qualified teachers for the expansion of schools. Most of the teachers were unprepared to deal with realities of teaching in a Russian school.⁵³ The article revealed that the Committee instituted an emergency plan in order to train and to increase the availability of teachers. The plan was to take one to two years in order to train teachers quickly and to provide an atmosphere for them to succeed in the classroom. The Committee promised:

[The State would] pay particular attention to the necessity for improving teachers' living conditions and for guaranteeing the privileges and advantages granted teachers by government; they are to increase their attention to the teachers' political growth and to raising their cultural and practical qualification; and they are to draw pedagogical institutes and universities more widely into the work of raising teachers' qualifications, giving them systematic help and retraining them in disciplines related to polytechnical and production education.⁵⁴

Clearly, the state recognized that this reform plan started to fall apart in 1961, because of the weak structure it was being built on. The educational reform law promised all of these great changes for Soviet citizens; however, the sheer logistics of implementing this ambitious plan in six years were ignored.

⁵² "Follow-up on a *Pravda* Report: "What We Expect from the Academy of Pedagogy," *Pravda*, June 24, 1959, 4.

⁵³ "Provide Schools with Cadres of Teachers- In the Party Central Committee and the U.S.S.R. Council of Ministry," *Izvestia*, September 29, 1961, 1.

⁵⁴ "Provide Schools with Cadres of Teachers- In the Party Central Committee and the U.S.S.R. Council of Ministry," *Izvestia*, September 29, 1961, 1.

In 1963, the Soviet public was still trying to understand how the curriculum affected Soviet teachers, especially their teaching methods. This was the time when the Central Committee evaluated the progress of the “Law on Strengthening Ties between Education and Life” throughout the Soviet Union. One aspect of the debate was if the changes properly taught science and technology to the students in order to ensure their current lead in the space race against the United States and the future of communism in technological innovations.⁵⁵ This was one of the intentions for the law from the beginning to ensure the availability of workers to support fully the Russian economy and its goals of advancements. An article published in October 3, 1963 in *Izvestia* discussed in length how science and technology could be improved through modernizing teaching methods. This article contained a collection of views from various people that explained different perspectives on updating the science curriculum. A common theme among them was that schools could not remain isolated from innovations in science, but needed to incorporate them into their lessons.⁵⁶ This showed at least in science that some of the public was open to including the new practices in the field of science into the education system. In fact, this article pushed for education to be even closer to realities of a respective field’s work and advancements.

Science was not the only area in which teachers and other educational professors attempted to change their teaching approach. Khrushchev’s era was more liberal about allowing intellectual freedom to explore different academic endeavors and experiments.⁵⁷ Therefore, this most likely allowed teachers and other educational professionals to examine how to improve teaching methods in order to help their students learn according to the law’s requirements on production training. Teachers had demanded these experiments since the very beginning of the law in 1959 as seen in the previously discussed letter to the editor. Teachers and local educational officials started to take the lead in some of the reforms with the approval of the Ministry. Another article published in a 1963 Soviet education journal described how teachers in the Lipetsk Region School performed experiments with study sessions and lessons for the students. The article does not go into detail on how the educators changed their methods,

⁵⁵ After the launching of Spunik, the Soviet government was intent on pushing their lead in the space race against the United States. McCauley, *The Khrushchev Era*, 69.

⁵⁶ “We Begin the Discussion: Problems of Public Education,” *Izvestia*, October 13, 1959, 3.

⁵⁷ Stephen V. Bittner, *The Many Lives of Khrushchev’s Thaw: Experience and Memory in Moscow’s Arbat* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2008), 7-10.

but it does state that local party officials supported them. The Ministry approved their work to be widely practiced by the entire Soviet Union.⁵⁸

This is important in the sense that some educators and the state were willing to introduce new ways of teaching and methodology. In 1963, an article by Professor L. Zankov, who worked at the Academy of Pedagogy, sheds further light on how teachers were to change their methodology. Most of his suggestions were to have teachers take a smaller leadership role in the lessons and to allow students to work through tasks, which would require teachers to stop the use of repetition. Zankov did not completely write off this way of teaching. However, he did argue that the development of the student would be slower.⁵⁹ Essentially, the state moved away from how the previous Stalin educational system strictly guided teachers by attempting to teach children in a more liberal method.

The liberalization and decentralization of the education system that Khrushchev instituted differed from Stalin's approach to education by allowing more individual agency. For one, the lack of preparation meant that the large educational shift that Khrushchev envisioned could not be fully led or implemented by the state. This allowed teachers to have some agency in the education system because they had to fill some of the void left by the state in order to teach their students. Teachers were thus able to explore new teaching methods that incorporated production training into the curriculum and focused less on rote memorization. Stalin had thought teachers could not be trusted with the responsibility of teaching the next generation of Soviet citizens their political values.⁶⁰ He had focused on destroying the individual agency of teachers in order to protect the collective political ideology. This approach spilled over into his history curriculum, which focused on the history of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union and ignored its relationship with other foreign nations. Khrushchev attempted to address this issue by incorporating recent Soviet and foreign nations' histories into the teaching of history.

Changes to Ideological Teaching within History Courses

Some of the Soviet public took issue with the previous education system not because of its infrastructure, lack of teachers, or teaching

⁵⁸ E.I. Afanasenko, "Concerning the Progress in Implementing the Law on Strengthening the Ties of the School with Life and Further Developing the System of Public Education in the RSFSR," *Uchitel'skaia gazeta*, July 26, 1962, in *Education in the USSR: A Collection of Readings from Soviet Journals*, vol 1, ed. Fred Ablin (New York: International Arts & Sciences Press, 1963), 65.

⁵⁹ L. Zankov, "Discussion of Problems of Public Education: The School and Development of Children," *Izvestia*, November 2, 1963, 5.

⁶⁰ Eklof, "Introduction- Russian Education: The Past in the Present," 4-6.

methodology, but because of the failure of its curriculum to emphasize the teaching of communist ideals. History and the other social sciences were particularly criticized for not enthusiastically promoting communist ideals because history was commonly thought to be boring. There was not a clear reason why the Soviet public had focused on improving the teaching of history during this time period. It may have even been that Stalin saw the humanities as a science instead of an art form of telling a historical narrative.⁶¹ This meant that historians were only focused on telling the facts with communism as the “end” in lieu of an exciting historical narrative. Under Khrushchev, the discipline evolved into something more exciting for students because of the importance he assigned to it with his ideas on the new Soviet citizen.

Khrushchev’s reforms focused on creating a hybrid by grounding the history curriculum in a more traditional 1920s Marxist-Leninist view, while also making students more globally aware of other foreign nations. An article published on October 14, 1959, in *Pravda* by the Academy of Pedagogy, discussed the current state of how history was taught in the school. This report argued, “the study of history in the schools is of enormous significance in inculcating the fundamentals of the Marxist-Leninist world view in young people.”⁶² Clearly, the Academy of Pedagogy thought history was the basis for communist teaching and important for young Soviet students to learn. It argued, “the study of history consistently opens up before the pupils a picture of the development of human society in a form accessible to them.”⁶³ It is important to note the Academy also described a proposal to simplify the current courses in history to focus on Soviet history and the recent history of foreign countries. Essentially, the elementary-level course would provide more of a world history, while the secondary course would provide an intensive background in Soviet history.⁶⁴ This shows a clear shift being made in the fundamentals of teaching history to Soviet students in order to focus on the 1920s ideal of communism, while incorporating a globally aware curriculum.

Most of the Academy’s proposal was incorporated into the reform plan for history. The Party’s improvement to the history program for eight-year compulsory education seemed to be completed by 1961. An article by N. Kuzin claimed that the new program provided students with an adequate history of the

⁶¹ Oleg Kharkhordin, “From Priests to Pathfinders: The Fate of the Humanities and Social Sciences in Russia after World War II,” *American Historical Review* 120, no. 4 (October 2015): 1283.

⁶² Russian Republic Academy of Pedagogy, “On the Teaching of History in Schools,” *Pravda*, September 16, 1959, 2.

⁶³ Academy of Pedagogy, “On the Teaching of History in Schools.”

⁶⁴ Academy of Pedagogy, “On the Teaching of History in Schools.”

"homeland." Kuzin mentioned that previous graduates of the "incomplete secondary" degree only were taught the history of antiquity and the Middle Ages, which left out the majority of recent history between the Soviet Union and foreign countries.⁶⁵ This would mean that the students who only received the eight years of education could not appreciate the current status of the communist system in the global context, which would be important to the Soviet government. This was an era not only of domestic liberalization, but also "peaceful coexistence" and increasing contact with the West and the rest of the world for the Soviet Union.⁶⁶

The new program provided more of a world history overview for the students. According to Kuzin's article, the students would have "a more profound understanding of the history of our homeland and its role in the world historical process, as well as to facilitat[e] their orientation in contemporary political events, the major facts of the history of foreign countries."⁶⁷ This author assigned the teaching of history as an "important part of the intellectual education of students."⁶⁸ This level of importance assigned to the larger picture of history showed that the educational reform plans were attempting to shift the younger generation's views on communism back to the idealistic age of the 1920s. It even goes as far as saying that students would learn "about the beginnings of the mass workers' movement, the rise of scientific communism, and the activity of its great founders, K. Marx and F. Engels."⁶⁹

Furthermore, the state decided to elicit the help of educational officials and teachers in order to implement the changes being made. An article discussed how the old education system did not provide enough visual aids or background in general history in order to make it both exciting and relevant for students. It is also important to note that the Russian Republic's Academy of Pedagogy reached out to history teachers and other humanities professionals in order to shape a plan to improve the teaching of history.⁷⁰ This may have been a masquerade by the state-run Academy of Pedagogy to inform the public that teachers were being consulted on the various educational changes. However, it does show that teachers' and other education professionals' opinions were

⁶⁵ N. Kuzin, "Give School Pupils a Good Knowledge of History- Study of Elementary Course in U.S.S.R. History to Be Introduced in Seventh Grade of All Schools in Country Beginning with the New School Year," *Pravda*, August 22, 1961, 2.

⁶⁶ Troyanovsky, "The Making of Soviet Foreign Policy," 239-241.

⁶⁷ Kuzin, "Give School Pupils a Good Knowledge of History."

⁶⁸ Kuzin, "Give School Pupils a Good Knowledge of History."

⁶⁹ Kuzin, "Give School Pupils a Good Knowledge of History."

⁷⁰ Academy of Pedagogy, "On the Teaching of History in Schools."

important on some level in order to ask for advice and input on educational policy. The state was not simply handing down mandates as in the previous decades. Academy’s and Kuzin’s articles were more idealistic and hopeful about the changes in the history curriculum, but there were structural issues that arose with them.

About two years after Kuzin’s article, the changes to history and social sciences courses still could not be implemented due to infrastructural issues. An article published in *Pravda* stated the new social science class that focused on “philosophy, politics, economy and teachings about communism” would not be instituted for a while because new teaching methods needed to be developed.⁷¹ The article stated that the new course would be “connected with life and with the practice of communist construction.”⁷² The importance of social sciences was seen in how the government provided assistance to help the social science teachers through these issues. The same article stated that a course would be offered by the “Ministry of Higher and Specialized Secondary Education, the Union-republic Ministries of Education and local public education agencies.”⁷³

The Soviet government seemed to support heavily the reforms to the history program and pushed for more ways to support developing citizens’ ideological background. The state saw a connection between the 1920s fundamentals of communism from Marx, Engels, and Lenin and recent domestic and global events. However, one flaw seemed to remain with the program, which was how to make it interesting for students. M. Nechkina, an academician, published an article in 1963 that described the need to have an exciting history teacher. He suggested that “there have already been plenty of just complaints about the grayness of history lessons and the dullness of textbooks ... their inability to engross the reader in exciting events.”⁷⁴ For him, the history books were simply too bland, so he argued that a more “active approach to acquiring knowledge” needs to be taught to teacher; which would excite their students about history.

The fault may not have been completely the teachers, but again the lack of available materials. Another article published in 1965 by Russian teachers argued that the necessary material, such as historical films and documents, were not available to them. These teachers did not argue with the idea beyond the new curriculum; however, the teaching tools in their local schools do not seem to

⁷¹ “Social Science in School- On Introducing a Course,” *Pravda*, January 3, 1963, 2.

⁷² “Social Science in School- On Introducing a Course,” *Pravda*, January 3, 1963, 2.

⁷³ “Social Science in School- On Introducing a Course,” *Pravda*, January 3, 1963, 2.

⁷⁴ M. Nechkina, “Discussion of Problems of Public Education: The Air Knowledge Breathes,” *Izvestia*, December 8, 1964, 5.

exist.⁷⁵ Thus, the same pattern was emerging in history as with the changing of the teaching structure under this new educational law. The schools' infrastructure could not handle the changes at such a quick pace, but people were generally embracing the new ideas and changes related to production training. This can be attributed to a revival in interest among Soviet citizens in instilling workers' values in the next generation.

The Intention of the Khrushchev era's Educational Reforms to Instill Workers' Values

All of these changes to move Soviet teaching methodology and curriculum towards production training were intended to provide students with the basic education in order to be productive workers and citizens for the Soviet Union. The new educational reform law's purpose was to instill the practical knowledge to be productive workers and, more important, have love for one's work. All of this training in their eight years of schooling was intended to prepare them for vocational schools or other higher education schools.⁷⁶ A Soviet educator, E. Krechetova, best sums up why the Soviet government pushed for production training. Krechetova stated that "the youth who works in the various factories shares with the factory collective all of their hopes, anxieties, successes and difficulties. The students understand that here people live and work in the spirit of Communism."⁷⁷ This means that the Soviet government and Khrushchev saw the development of workers' values directly connected to how communism would thrive. Therefore, the law fostered young students to be the next generation of workers and avert a possible labor shortage, while keeping the values of communism alive.

Most likely, this drive to change education came from Khrushchev's attempts to address the labor shortages from the war years.⁷⁸ A couple of years before the educational reform law in 1958, Khrushchev changed how Party officials were educated to focus more on practical economic education.⁷⁹ It cannot be assumed that Khrushchev changed the rest of the education system to model his Party officials' education, but it is clear he was focused on creating an atmosphere to grow a practical economy based on 1920s communist ideology. Any economy has its foundation in the available skilled labors, which changes

⁷⁵ M. Vinokurova, S. Chernyak and T. Kholodenko, "Polemics: History and Life," *Izvestia*, July 14, 1965, 3.

⁷⁶ A.F. Bordadyn, "On Technical Vocational Education," *Izvestia*, April 15, 1959, 3.

⁷⁷ E. Krechetova, "Learning from Life to Live," in *Soviet Educators on Soviet Education*, ed. and trans. Helen B. Redl (London: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1964), 51.

⁷⁸ McCauley, *The Khrushchev Era 1953-1964*, 74-75.

⁷⁹ Tompson, "Industrial Management and Economic Reform," 148-150.

with each generation. Therefore, it makes sense that on some level Khrushchev and the Communist Party would want to ensure that the next generation of workers had developed a work ethic that would advance the communist system. The Soviet government attempted to instill this work ethic in a practical sense by having citizens receive “not only a general scientific and polytechnical, esthetic, ethical and physical education and training, but a definite vocational and specialized education as well.”⁸⁰ This was done by introducing the students to work habits and training early on in their education.

Even before Khrushchev’s educational reform law, the party already took several steps to instill students with a strong work ethic and respect by having them do chores. *A Glimpse into a Boarding School* (1958) showcased several photographs of students cleaning and working around the school. Many of the photographs show the students in a happy state learning about work and life. For example, one photograph is of a boy frying fish for the rest of the school with the head chef. The caption described how the boy was surprised about by the ease of it.⁸¹ These photographs most likely were staged in order to promote the value of boarding schools to the Soviet public. Nevertheless, the promotion of the students’ work showed that the Soviet Union on some level appreciated the idea of students doing chores at a young age.

In 1959, the party decided in a decree to expand children’s school chores requirement even more by having the younger students take on more of a role in the upkeep of schools and their normal everyday operations. This was not a part of the educational reform law passed by the end of 1958; however, it followed the same line of thinking. Students’ tasks would depend on age, gender, physical ability, and standards for health protection. Some examples of the tasks were “cleaning classrooms, plant[ing] and grow[ing] trees and flowers, tak[ing] care of animals, look[ing] after visual and other aids, bind[ing] books, [and] work[ing] as monitors in buffet and lunchrooms.”⁸² Students in higher education would work in the school’s farms, monitor study areas, maintain dormitories, and so on. The Party Central Committee and the U.S.S.R. Council of Ministers provided instructions for Union-Republic Councils of Ministers to give the schools the necessary equipment to perform all of the chores. The committee thought “that a wider enlistment of students in performing chores [was] of great significance in training them for work and [would] contribute to

⁸⁰ D. Pavlov, “Labor and Upbringing of the New Man,” *Pravda*, August 7, 1959, 4.

⁸¹ Pechernikova and Haldey, *A Glimpse into a Boarding School*, n.p.

⁸² The Party Central Committee and the U.S.S.R. Council of Ministry, “Students’ Chores Are Essential Part of Training Youth for Work,” *Pravda*, June 6, 1959, 1.

introducing students to physical labor.”⁸³ Few Soviet citizens voiced any sort of complaint about these educational changes in the press, which suggests that the public may not have been completely against this drive toward work ethics.

In fact, some of the Soviet public asserted that the educational reform law was not doing enough to instill Communist work values in young Soviet students. An article in *Pravda* in April 1959 discussed how first-graders’ or first years’ books did not provide the necessary terms for them to understand factory work. According to the author, Olga Rusanova, the young students did not have a real grasp on what made “factories, collective farms, [and] machines.”⁸⁴ The students were only exposed to illustrations of the work with no real meaning beyond them. Therefore, the author asserted that students were generally confused about what factories actually did in Soviet society and themes beyond the “new man.”⁸⁵ The author saw this as a comprehensive problem in the early Soviet education system, because they were not taught the meaning of the words, such as factory and collective, to understand the communist system. However, the complaint is reflective of the larger change to go back to Lenin’s and Marx’s teaching occurring within the general education system. The idea of fostering the comprehension of factory and collective into a child’s life would start them on the path of embodying communist ideals. Nevertheless, this was only one strain of an argument about production training.

Another problem was that the educational reforms did not foster a passion for work in young Soviet students or even provide them with adequate work training. For example, an article published in 1961 by polytechnical school teachers argued that the state’s work program did not provide what it promised in terms of students’ motivation to work. The teachers asserted that the students were not getting any sort of worker’s training or values for the program, because of their lack of knowledge about working in a factory. This was despite the fact that Moscow schools were doing on-the-job training in the factory. In fact, the authors argued that workers thought of their assigned students “as a burden interfering with his work.”⁸⁶ The teachers asserted that the issue was the factory environment, because students could not touch the material and work with it under safe conditions. This meant that the program failed to provide students with even the basic knowledge about factory life. The students could not gain

⁸³ The Party Central Committee and the U.S.S.R. Council of Ministry, “Students’ Chores Are Essential Part of Training Youth for Work.”

⁸⁴ Olga Rusknova, “A Person’s First Book,” *Izvestia*, April 26, 1959, 4.

⁸⁵ Rusknova, “A Person’s First Book.”

⁸⁶ N. Borisov, A. Belitsky, B. Lagun, A. Mostovoi, “Two Years of Searching and Reflections: Polytechnical Development Is the Compass- Work Can’t Be Taught Through Idleness- Should the Pupil Receive Pay?” *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, March 7, 1961, 2.

any practical knowledge because they were only observers instead of participates in the work.

Therefore, the students would not get beyond any sort of basic training and have no deep understanding of practical work. This would be crucial for any student to gain a love for work, which was the focus of the party. The authors argued that the issue was giving the students too broad of a polytechnical education without specialization in one job.⁸⁷ These educators were most likely focusing on the fact that the eight years of incomplete education only provided basic training. This would not provide any solid foundation to specialize into one job, which would help later in life. It is important to note that the teachers did not disagree with the intentions of the program. The fault for them was the lack of process toward the students developing a motivation to work.

Ultimately, both of these articles alluded to a crucial flaw in Khrushchev’s educational reforms. These reforms were intended to provide the next generation of Soviet citizens with the important Communist work ethic and passion. Students were supposed to have the basic knowledge of the workers collective and factory work, which created the “hero story” beyond the communist system.⁸⁸ Few Soviet citizens appeared to have disagreed with supporting the communist system in such a way with education, but this could have been attributable to the state-controlled press. In fact, some articles in *Pravda* and *Izvestia* called for more production training.⁸⁹ Most of them attributed it to the law failing to describe how students would gain such a knowledge about work and life from their education.

Most of the educators attempted to follow the law but did not have much in the way of guidance from central government agencies until the early 1960s, even though the law was supposed to be implemented in 1959. This can be attributed to the lack of a clear plan by the state to implement the law and change the educational structure. In 1964 the Party committee decided to take away the final year of the 11-year secondary schooling, which was intended to provide a year of on-the-job training. This was not part of the eight-year

⁸⁷ N. Borisov, A. Belitsky, B. Lagun and A. Mostovoi, “Two Years of Searching and Reflections.” Another article described how the Kaluga region had similar issues with production training, but four years later. The article argued that the cost of running an instructional workshop outweighed how many students remained in the workshop. See N. Antonov and N. Alexandrov, “Not by Calling, But for Duty- On Production Training of Schoolchildren, *Pravda*, January 6, 1965, 4.

⁸⁸ Ruskova, “A Person’s First Book.”

⁸⁹ For an example of an article that described how children in the city and rural areas needed more facilities so supervisors could provide discipline while parents worked, see V. Baiderin, V. Darmodekhin, A. Dolenko, and et al., “At Home in School,” *Izvestia*, April 17, 1960, 1-2. For an example of an article that praised the law’s results, but also called for the Party and state to develop its structure, see “Schools on a New Path,” *Pravda*, May 26, 1960, 1.

compulsory education, which was the focus of this paper. It was eliminated from the optional three years for advanced training in vocations or preparatory for college. The state thought the extra year of job training did not provide the students with any valuable work experience, which means entering into the work force earlier would be more beneficial.⁹⁰ This was also the year when Khrushchev was removed from power, which means he did not have the political power to stop any changes to his educational reforms in its final implementation year.⁹¹

This does not mean that the Soviet public rejected the premise of the new educational reform law. In fact, as the press showed, many interested individuals wanted more education especially in terms of production training. The American travelers even noted in 1965 that “one can be assured that work experience will remain part of the educational system in the U.S.S.R.”⁹² They also argued that, “work experience and education that is more ‘closely related to life’ will be emphasized.”⁹³ The support and drive beyond the institution of this law showed that people wanted to go back to the idealistic time of 1920s Communism and comradely values, while promoting a more globally aware citizen. The new educational reform law supported these core values of the communist system; however, the Soviet Union’s internal structure simply could not institute such a wave of reform between 1959 to 1965.

⁹⁰ *School in the Soviet*, 66-70.

⁹¹ Taubman, Khrushchev, and Gleason, “Introduction,” 1-2.

⁹² *Schools in the Soviet*, 69.

⁹³ *Schools in the Soviet*, 70.

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Helen Keller: Blind, Deaf, and Radical Activist

By Julius Pascual

Helen Keller was a beloved public figure whose whole existence can be summed up into two words: blind and deaf. However, this is not the case when one examines her remarkable life. Beyond her disabilities, Keller was a college graduate, author, socialist, and radical activist who tirelessly advocated for feminism, pacifism, and civil rights. She met every president from Grover Cleveland to Lyndon B. Johnson and was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom for her activism. Among her many admirers were Alexander Graham Bell, Mark Twain, Queen Elizabeth II, and the Pope. All of this, however, is not generally known about Keller's life.

Considering this, the two main questions that must be raised are: Why do most people only know Keller as a deaf and blind woman? And, why have her disabilities defined her legacy? Contained within these two questions is a fascinating historical debate that is currently not being discussed by scholars. The purpose of this paper is to provide answers to these two questions and to foster a discussion on the subject. The paper presents a discussion, centered on Keller's reception and diminished legacy, as a means to provide historians an opportunity to review her life and legacy through a critical perspective.

The argument that this paper will present is that Helen Keller's radical political ideology and activism drew negative attention over time, which, in turn, diminished her legacy to only being known as deaf and blind. This argument is important because Keller is one of the most famous American icons of the twentieth century, but little is known about the extent of her achievements. Understanding Keller's political activism is important because it could provide people with a window to the sociopolitical environment of her time. This argument shows a new perspective because there is very little or almost no research on Keller's historical reception. A few historians have written about Keller's radical activist past in biographies, but most fail to comprehensively connect this with its consequences. It is time to uncover the ways in which Keller's political activism have distorted her life and legacy.

It is safe to say that there is more literature that focuses solely on Keller's disabilities rather than her political activism. However, in the realm of biographical literature, it is harder to determine whether this statement is true or false simply because there is not enough written in order to perform a

comparative analysis. With what has been written in Keller's biographical realm, two authors stand out: Kim E. Nielsen and Dorothy Herrmann.

In *The Radical Lives of Helen Keller*, Kim E. Nielsen argues that "manufactured frameworks of our historical memory" distort the perception of Keller's life and legacy.¹ Nielsen's biography of Keller attempts to break through these "manufactured frameworks" by placing a heavy emphasis on her political activism. This emphasis can clearly be seen through the title of her book—an obvious indication that Keller was indeed a radical. Apart from Keller's radical politics, it is almost impossible to fully comprehend her life without acknowledging her disabilities. Nielsen differs from other authors by not dedicating large portions of her book to Keller's disabilities. Nielsen skillfully and purposefully does this to further the discourse on Keller's radical politics and activism rather than her disabilities.

Helen Keller: A Life, written by Dorothy Herrmann, focuses on a different facet of Keller's life. Herrmann's biography creates a complex perception of Keller by concentrating more on her personal thoughts, values, and relationships. In order to create and enhance this complexity, there is a heavier emphasis on Keller's disabilities. The discussion of Keller's disabilities that takes place in this biography is the traditional success story that many have heard before. It is fair to say that Herrmann's interpretation and coverage of the subject are proficient and quite extensive.

In order to understand Keller's negative reception, it is important to consider the larger historical context of anti-radicalism. Ellen Schrecker's *Many Are the Crimes* is the perfect resource for this task. In Schrecker's book, she explores the history of anti-communism from the end of World War I to the McCarthy Era. This provides Schrecker the opportunity to show the evolution of anti-radical and anti-communist sentiments that many Americans possessed during the time. The book is comprehensive in its coverage of the history of anti-communism. To add to this, Schrecker's concluding analysis on present-day anti-radicalism is helpful and needed for comprehending the negative reception of Keller.

The historiographic debate on whether Keller's political ideology and activism caused her diminished legacy is almost non-existent and has yet to begin. It is possible that there is a cyclical reason for this—lack of literature on the subject matter does not inform or inspire historians, which, in turn, leads to lack of creation. The historiography of Keller still has plenty of gaps. One of these gaps, the question of whether her diminished legacy was a result of her

¹ Kim E. Nielsen, introduction to *The Radical Lives of Helen Keller* (New York: New York University Press, 2004), 1.

political ideology, will be filled with the research presented in this paper. Before that can be accomplished, it is important to understand Keller's life.

On June 27, 1880, in Tuscumbia, Alabama, Helen Keller was born. At nineteen months old, Keller fell ill and was diagnosed with "acute congestion of the stomach and brain," which, in turn, caused her to become deaf and blind.² Though the illness did not last long, its effects did. Life at home became challenging as Keller grew up realizing the difficulties of her disabilities. Keller's reaction to her disabilities manifested into what is popularly known as the "wild child" stage of her life. In her autobiography, *Story of My Life*, Keller noted that she had caused her family to become hopeless. It soon became clear that some form of communication was needed. The family saw hope when Alexander Graham Bell, who was currently working with the deaf and experimenting with hearing mechanisms, referred the family to Michael Anagnos, the director of the Perkins Institute for the Blind. The family contacted Anagnos asking for a teacher capable of helping Keller. Within weeks, Anagnos recommended a suitable candidate for the family, a former student named Anne Sullivan.

One of the first learning experiences that Keller had with Sullivan involved a doll. Sullivan spelled "d-o-l-l" on Keller's hand until she was able to imitate the action on her own. Although Keller was able to imitate the action, she admitted to not knowing that she was spelling a word or that words even existed.³ A breakthrough in Keller's education occurred when she was learning the word *water*. Inside a well house, Sullivan drew water from the spout, placed Keller's hand underneath, and then spelled "w-a-t-e-r." Keller described this moment by writing, "...somehow the mystery of language was revealed to me."⁴ After this realization, she insisted in learning the names of all objects, abstract concepts, and most importantly, how to read and speak. It was clear that Keller greatly exceeded any expectations placed on her. For the next several years, Keller broadened her understanding of the world—while gaining fame in the process. From President Grover Cleveland to Mark Twain, she acquired a long list of supporters and admirers. Keller's newfound fame allowed her to receive monetary aid to attend Radcliffe College, an annex of Harvard University meant for female students.

In the fall of 1900, Keller attended Radcliffe and later graduated to become the first deaf and blind person to obtain a Bachelor of Arts degree. Upon her graduation, she became politically awakened. Keller imagined herself as a

² Ibid., 7.

³ Ibid., 22.

⁴ Ibid., 23.

public figure that could advocate and provide help to the deaf and blind.⁵ Through lobbying and fundraising efforts, Keller found early success in winning the public's sympathy. Her advocacy for the deaf and blind would not only lead her to conduct research on the issue, it would also refine her political ideology.

Keller hypothesized that blindness and deafness "are to be laid not at the door of Providence, but at the door of mankind."⁶ Her research on industrial growth confirmed her beliefs. Keller found that "industrial accidents, economic inequality, [and] poverty..." were all factors that caused blindness.⁷ Furthermore, her realization that education, class, and race had a correlation with blindness caused her to become skeptical of capitalism. Frustrated by the results of her research, Keller joined the Socialist Party of America (SPA) because it was the only political party at the time that reflected her cause and values.

After joining the SPA, Keller experienced public scrutiny for her political ideology and disabilities for the first time. Keller responded to this scrutiny by writing "How I Became a Socialist," which was published in a socialist newspaper, *The New York Call*. This document is important for three reasons. First, as the title suggests, it provides Keller's reasoning for joining the SPA. Second, it provides her defense for the scrutiny placed on her. Third, it may be the first instance in which her disabilities were used to discredit her political ideology.

The historical context of the article is certainly fascinating. During the time in which the article was released, American socialism was undoubtedly at its peak. According to data on membership of the SPA, there were 113,371 paying members—the highest it had ever been.⁸ With this in mind, it is no surprise that the presidential election of 1912 garnered the SPA and its presidential nominee, Eugene V. Debs, six percent of the popular vote. American socialism was indisputably popular, but it was still located on the fringe of the country's political spectrum—because of this, Keller attracted negative attention from several newspaper journalists.

The tone of Keller's article was mostly critical and defensive. Keller was highly critical of the journalists who misinformed the public about the truth of her political activism and ideology. Journalists claimed that Keller's political beliefs were "imbibed" upon her by Anne Sullivan and her husband, John Macy.⁹

⁵Nielsen, *The Radical Lives of Helen Keller*, 21.

⁶Helen Keller, "I Must Speak," *Ladies' Home Journal*, January 1909, n.p.

⁷Nielsen, *Radical Lives*, 23-24.

⁸James Gregory and Rebecca Flores, "Socialist Party Membership by States 1904-1940," *Mapping American Social Movements Through the 20th Century*, accessed 23 October 2016 from http://depts.washington.edu/moves/SP_map-members.shtml.

⁹Helen Keller, "How I Became a Socialist," *The New York Call*, 3 November 1912, n.p.

Journalists based this claim by the method in which Keller learned and gathered information. After acknowledging the claim, Keller took a defensive stance. She made it clear that she became a socialist because she read large amounts of socialist literature, not because of forced indoctrination.

The most revealing section of Keller's article are the last two passages. In it, Keller described an interaction with the editor for *The Brooklyn Eagle* newspaper. According to Keller's account, an editor for the newspaper paid her many compliments. After her socialist beliefs became more widely known, the very same editor reminded the public that Keller was "blind and deaf and especially liable to error."¹⁰ This *ad hominem* attack toward Keller might be one of the earliest signs of her diminished legacy—this will be explored later on.

In order to understand how Keller was received in the past and in the present, it is important to discuss her accomplishments as a radical activist. A closer examination of her feminist, socialist, and pacifist life, as well as her work with several organizations, will show how remarkable she was. It is only through this examination that one will fully comprehend her complexity and how much her legacy has diminished over time.

It can be argued that Keller's complexity is derived from her experiences in political activism. She was politically active in the suffragist and women's rights movement. Keller firmly believed that it was a woman's right and duty to attain higher education. In *Out of the Dark*, she commented on the need for higher education and the college woman by writing:

For the first time in the history of the world, women are expected to have an intelligent understanding of business, of politics, of all the practical problems of our modern life... By throwing herself into college affairs, she acquires the habits of rendering intelligent and efficient service to others; so that when she graduates, she becomes a practical force in the world, and a responsible member of society.¹¹

It is clear that Keller believed that one purpose of college education was to create women who could contribute to the economy and society. From a feminist perspective, higher education was Keller's method of separating from the traditional breadwinner model of families. To add to this, Keller believed that higher education liberated women into becoming independent individuals.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Helen Keller, *Out of the Dark* (New York: Doubleday Page & Company, 1913), 92.

Keller was at the forefront of women's rights and suffrage, often tirelessly campaigning or writing essays for both. In "Why Men Need Woman Suffrage," Keller wrote that if women had the right to vote they would be able to "protect themselves from man-made laws that are antagonistic to their interests."¹² By stating this, it is evident that Keller believed that women should have the right to create or have a say in laws that concern them. Keller's opinions on women's suffrage were moderately standard compared to the feminists of her time; however, her end-goal contrasted significantly. In an interview with a *New York Times* reporter, she claimed that she was a "militant suffragette" because *she believed that "suffrage will lead to socialism and to me socialism is the ideal cause."*¹³ This view shocked many of her followers and supporters. The reaction toward her statements might have been needless since she viewed "women's suffrage as a strategic field of battle for carrying out the broader fight against capitalism."¹⁴ Keller thought that women's suffrage, which was advocated by mostly working-class women, was a Marxian class struggle.

When asked, "Who is your favorite hero in real life?" Keller responded, "Eugene V. Debs. He dared to do what other men were afraid to do."¹⁵ Debs, the perennial candidate, was the SPA presidential nominee for five elections. Keller supported and campaigned tirelessly for him because it was clear that he and the SPA were the ones that would value, prioritize, and fight for her political beliefs. For example, the Socialist Party platform of 1912 explicitly called for "securing a more effective inspection of workshops, factories and mines."¹⁶ As previously stated, Keller conducted research that found education, class, and race as factors of industrial accidents that caused blindness. It is likely that Keller believed in more effective inspection of workplaces due to this research on industrial growth. The 1912 platform may have appealed to Keller, but not the majority of Americans. Debs failed to gain a single electoral vote during the election.

Nevertheless, the SPA nominated Debs as their presidential candidate again in 1920. Two years prior, Debs was sent to prison for violating the Sedition Act by encouraging resistance to the military draft of World War I. Debs, who campaigned as Convict No. 9653, still found a supporter in Keller despite his circumstances. In *The New York Call*, Keller wrote a letter to Debs stating: "You dear comrade! I have long loved you because you are an apostle of brotherhood and freedom. ...I have followed in the trail of your footsteps... now I reach out

¹² Helen Keller, "Why Men Need Women Suffrage," *The New York Call*, 17 October 1913, n.p.

¹³ Dorothy Herrmann, *Helen Keller: A Life* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), 176.

¹⁴ Keith Rosenthal, "The Politics of Helen Keller," *International Socialist Review*, accessed 20 November 2016, <http://isreview.org/issue/96/politics-helen-keller>.

¹⁵ Herrmann, *Helen Keller: A Life*, 227.

¹⁶ Socialist Party Platform, "Socialist Party Platform of 1912," 12 May 1912.

my hand and clasp yours through prison bars.”¹⁷ Keller’s devotion to Debs is evident in the letter. There was no doubt in Keller’s mind that Debs was a political prisoner since the government wanted to silence those who opposed the war. Keller, however, would not be made silent.

As a pacifist, Keller followed Debs’ approach of urging resistance to the draft due to her belief that World War I was a “profit-making venture for industrialists.”¹⁸ The connection between industrialism and militarism and its subsequent effects on the working class was obvious to Keller. In a speech titled “Menace of the Militarist Program,” she identified that the “burden of war always falls heaviest on the toilers.”¹⁹ She believed that the working class people were exploited by their “masters” and were then led to slaughter on the battlefield. Keller continued her criticism of this early form of the military-industrial complex by stating:

The United States is preparing to raise a billion dollars and a million soldiers in preparation for war. Behind the active agitators for defense you will find J.P. Morgan & Co., and the capitalists who have invested their money in shrapnel plants, and others that turn out implements of murder. They want armaments because they beget war, for these capitalists want to develop new markets for their hideous traffic.²⁰

Just as it was clear who carried the burden of war, it was also clear as to who would benefit from it. Keller aimed her criticism directly at the capitalists, specifically J.P. Morgan, for war profiteering. Her claims were substantiated. In another speech titled “Strike Against War,” she pointed out that “it is not a mere coincidence that six business associates of J.P. Morgan are officials of defense leagues.”²¹ Keller realized that by placing its business associates as officials of these defense leagues, J.P. Morgan had the unique opportunity to gain an enormous amount of wealth by deciding to select weapon-manufacturing companies in which they had purchased shares. Since these weapons were used for war, Keller recognized that J.P. Morgan was profiting not only through questionable business practices, but also by manufacturing instruments used for murder.

¹⁷ Helen Keller, “To Eugene V. Debs,” *The New York Call*, 29 April 1919, n.p.

¹⁸ Nielsen, *Radical Lives*, 7.

¹⁹ Helen Keller, “Menace of the Militarist Program” (1915), in Philip Foner, ed. *Helen Keller: Her Socialist Years: Writings and Speeches* (New York: International Publishers, 1967), 73.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Helen Keller, “Strike against War” (1915), in Foner, *Helen Keller*, 75.

Another factor that fostered Keller's pacifist ideology was her anti-imperialist attitude towards World War I. She was an anti-imperialist due to her belief that imperialism largely benefited capitalists. In the same speech, Keller stated, "Congress is not preparing to defend the people of the United States. It is planning to protect the capital of American speculators and investors in Mexico, South America, China, and the Philippine Islands. Incidentally this preparation will benefit the manufacturers of munitions and war machines."²² Keller noticed that the government hid the aforementioned war-profiteers, speculators, and investors under the veil of national defense. Instead of national defense, Keller pointed out that the true intention of the government was to allow capitalists to gain large sums of money from imperialist conquest.

Moreover, Keller was also an anti-imperialist because she believed that imperialism created increased global conflict. In the same speech, Keller reminded the listeners the outcome of the Spanish-American War—which she considered an imperialistic campaign—and also warned of its potential ramifications. Keller stated, "You know the last war we had we quite accidentally picked up some islands in the Pacific Ocean which may someday be the cause of a quarrel between ourselves and Japan. I'd rather drop those islands right now and forget about them than go to war to keep them. Wouldn't you?"²³ Her words showed that she was highly perceptive of the consequences of imperialism. Unfortunately, Keller was correct as her warnings manifested into the Pacific War more than twenty-five years later.

Similar to World War I, Keller remained a pacifist during the Second World War. The rapid advancement of military technology led her to express "alarm at the violence and weapons" that characterized the conflict.²⁴ Specifically, the atomic bomb deeply worried Keller. Like most civilians, she did not find out about the atomic bomb until it was used on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In 1948, three years after the bombing, Keller visited both cities as a Goodwill Ambassador. Having visited Hiroshima in 1937, Keller was shocked at the damage done to the city. In a letter after her visit, she wrote to a longtime friend:

We are still aching all over from that piteous experience — it exceeds in horror and anguish the accounts I have read... As you know, the city was literally levelled by the atomic bomb... its desolation, irreplaceable loss and mourning can be realized

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Nielsen, *Radical Lives*, 7.

only by those who are on the spot... Instead of the fair, flourishing city we saw eleven years ago, there is only life struggling daily... As a result of that inferno two hundred thousand persons are now dead...²⁵

There is no doubt that Keller's visit to postwar Japan greatly affected her. It will never be known whether Keller felt conflicted representing the country that caused the widespread devastation that she experienced firsthand. Keller strengthened her pacifist beliefs after her visit and committed the rest of her life to fighting against atomic weapons.

Throughout her life, Keller fought for the causes that she believed in. This is especially evident when considering her work with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), and the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB). For Keller, "the root of all these campaigns lay in a fundamental drive for justice and social equality."²⁶

Keller's support of the NAACP was made public in 1916 when she donated money to the association. She reinforced this support by writing a letter to the NAACP. Keller wrote:

I warmly endorse your efforts to bring before the country the facts about the unfair treatment of the colored people in some parts of the United States. What a comment upon our social justice is the need of an association like yours! ...Ashamed in my very soul I behold in my own beloved south-land the tears of those who are oppressed...²⁷

It is clear that she felt enthusiastic about the objectives of the NAACP. She firmly believed that the association was a step forward in obtaining equal treatment and protection for colored people. The NAACP was pleased to receive Keller's letter and endorsement. W.E.B. Du Bois, a prominent civil rights activist, even published the letter in the association's newspaper.²⁸ The endorsement allowed the group to gain widespread publicity. Keller's public endorsement, however, revealed a private conflict that she faced. As a

²⁵ Kim E. Nielsen, *Helen Keller: Selected Writings* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 252.

²⁶ Liz Crow, "Helen Keller: Rethinking the Problematic Icon," *Disability & Society* 15:6 (2000): 10.

²⁷ Nielsen, *Radical Lives*, 38-39.

²⁸ Ibid.

Southerner, she felt shameful that her own people were denying others equal protection of the law due to the color of their skin. To add to this, her endorsement strained family relations, especially with her own mother. She noted that her mother “had a Southerner’s interest in politics.”²⁹ Keller’s internal conflict can be seen when she continued on to say, “It grieves me that I should have added to the sadness that weighed upon her.”³⁰ Combined with familial discord, her endorsement also drew negative attention from many Southerners—this will be discussed later on.

In 1920, Keller co-founded the ACLU. Frustrated with the country’s deteriorating political climate, she decided to take a stance on civil liberties by helping create the organization. There is no doubt that the Espionage and Sedition Acts played a crucial role in forming her opinion. It is important to remember that Debs, who Keller admired and supported, was imprisoned for violating these two pieces of legislation. Keller knew that Debs’ arrest and imprisonment were violations of his civil liberties. Tired of suppression, Keller co-founded the ACLU as a way to protect and preserve the rights and individual freedoms of all Americans.

Despite having played a major role in the creation and growth of both the NAACP and the ACLU, Keller is most notably known for her work with the AFB. The AFB provided Keller with a platform to raise awareness and funds for the blind. Due to her work with the AFB, “state commissions for the blind were created, rehabilitation centers were built, and education was made accessible to those with vision loss.”³¹ Although she was able to accomplish so much with the AFB, her relationship with the organization became problematic over time. She initially joined the AFB in order to find financial security, which had been a struggle throughout most of her adult life. Due to this, she felt forced to do exactly what the organization wanted her to do—leaving Keller with little independence. Another problem was Keller’s conflicting portrayal of the blind as both disadvantaged and independent.³² She felt that asking for donations was begging and that “it was a step backwards in the evolution of being a blind person.”³³ She grew tired of rationalizing this conflict and eventually despised

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ “Helen Keller Biography,” *American Foundation for the Blind*, accessed 20 November 2016, <http://www.afb.org/info/about-us/helen-keller/biography-and-chronology/biography/1235#political>.

³² Ibid., 22.

³³ Crow, “Rethinking the Problematic Icon,” 9.

asking for donations. Nonetheless, having worked for the organization for over forty years, Keller's "ideals found their purest, most lasting expression in her work for the AFB."³⁴

When she felt that her political activism was idling, Keller immediately moved on to something that would satisfy her objectives. In 1916, she left the SPA and joined the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW or Wobblies). The Wobblies wanted to overthrow capitalism by uniting all skilled and unskilled workers, initiating strikes, creating propaganda, and organizing boycotts.³⁵ In "How I Became an IWW," published by the *New York Tribune*, she provided her reasoning toward joining the Wobblies. Keller revealed:

"I became an IWW because I found out that the Socialist party was too slow. It is sinking in the political bog. It is almost, if not quite, impossible for the party to keep its revolutionary character so long as it occupies a place under the government and seeks office under it. The government does not stand for interests the Socialist party is supposed to represent. The true task is to unite and organize all workers on an economic basis, and it is the workers themselves who must secure freedom for themselves, who must grow strong. Nothing can be gained by political action. That is why I became an IWW."³⁶

Keller's tone in the article is unmistakably more radical than anything she had ever written beforehand. This new surge of radicalism can be accredited to her realization that the SPA was stagnant in its revolutionary ideals and that political action through the government was ineffective. These realizations required Keller to join the IWW because it united and organized all workers to achieve a common goal. There was no doubt in her mind that the IWW would provide a faster and more direct change.

With the Wobblies, Keller supported various strike efforts by sending money and letters of encouragement. Bill Haywood, a prominent leader of the IWW, commended Keller for joining their cause. During a strike in Little Falls, New York, she wrote about the workers stating, "Their cause is my cause. If they are denied a living wage, I also am denied. While they are industrial slaves, I cannot be free."³⁷ She truly believed in the cause of the strikers and even

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Nielsen, *Radical Lives*, 27.

³⁶ Helen Keller, "Why I Became an IWW," *The New York Tribune*, 16 January 1916, n.p.

³⁷ Helen Keller, "To the Strikers at Little Falls, New York" (1912), in Foner, *Helen Keller*, 37.

inherited their struggle as her own cause. Eventually, the IWW declined in members and supporters, one of which was Keller, who later disassociated with the group.

Keller's separation from the Wobblies, and radical politics in general, was largely due to the negative reception of her political ideology. This reception, both past and present, diminished the legacy that she would ultimately leave behind. In order to understand her reasoning, one must examine: why Keller's political ideology was received negatively in the first place, the criticisms that she faced, and what she did during her final years.

Beginning with Keller's past reception, it is important to first consider the historical context of the United States in the early 1900s. During this time, the nation witnessed domestic and global changes that transformed America into an international superpower. The rapid growth of cities, which can be credited to the large influx of immigrants arriving into the country daily, allowed a more diverse population to spread new ideas and philosophies—like Communism or Socialism. At the same time, a booming industrial economy paved the way for the modern age. This industrial economy, however, was built on the backs of workers who were minimally paid and forced to labor in dangerous conditions. Frustrated by their circumstances, many groups, especially workers, challenged the government for sociopolitical reform through radical activism. On the global stage, the country was learning to manage its new role as an international superpower. World War I tested the country's new role. Although the nation was victorious, it faced many domestic challenges. The end of the war created domestic challenges for other nations as well. Russia, for example, experienced a revolution that replaced its Tsarist autocracy with a new Bolshevik government. This new communist government was seen as a threat and frightened many Americans during the First Red Scare.

The First Red Scare is crucial in understanding Keller's negative public reception. It is important to note that the event consisted largely of insubstantial threats. A. Mitchell Palmer, then Attorney General, played a significant role in orchestrating the First Red Scare by delivering anti-communist and anti-socialist rhetoric that struck fear in many Americans. Moreover, Palmer used his government position to execute the "Palmer Raids," which saw the unjustified arrests of many civilians suspected of being subversives.

Palmer's message needed a medium in order to be effective. At the time, the most widely available medium was the newspaper. Newspaper publishers and journalists were willing to spread Palmer's message because it benefited them. An analysis of the *New York Times*, found that "News that places the Soviet Union in an unfavorable light receives more attention than news that is

sympathetic.”³⁸ The newspaper publishers knew that they would receive higher readership and sales if they implemented this tactic. Additionally, it was found that “There is a tendency for unwarranted headlines, loaded words and questionable sources of information, when occurring in *Times* reports, to be consistently unfavorable to the Soviets.”³⁹ This showed that one of the nation’s most widely read newspapers purposefully portrayed the Soviet government negatively. The negative portrayal of the newspapers combined with Palmer’s rhetoric, strengthened the belief that the Soviet government, Communism, and Socialism were inherently anti-American. This belief planted the seeds to Keller’s negative reception.

A difficult relationship existed between Keller and newspaper journalists throughout her adult life. During her younger years, these many journalists praised her for overcoming adversity. After her political awakening, however, these same journalists openly attacked, criticized, and discredited her ideology. These journalists often used Keller’s disabilities as a means to belittle her ability to form her own thoughts and opinions. By focusing on her disabilities instead of her activism or accomplishments, journalists created and reinforced a simple narrative of Keller that, over time, ultimately became her legacy. In order to understand this, one must first examine Keller’s past reception through the newspaper articles that criticized her.

After the release of Keller’s autobiography, a journalist from *The Nation* was quick to criticize and discredit her. The journalist was skeptical of Keller’s ability to form original ideas and descriptions of objects and phenomenon. This can clearly be seen when he criticized that “all ideas are second-hand, consciously and unconsciously drawn from a million outside sources... All her knowledge is hearsay knowledge, her very sensations are for the most part vicarious, and yet she writes of things beyond her power of perception with the assurance of one who has verified every word.”⁴⁰ This scathing attack on Keller’s visual and auditory disabilities garnered an immediate response from her. She replied to the journalist stating: “He thinks that a blind person cannot know what we know, or imagine what we know, through our ears and eyes. Worse than that this critic thinks he knows what only a deaf-blind person can know.”⁴¹ This dispute between *The Nation* and Keller was highly publicized and played a significant role in her public reception. Instead of being recognized as an

³⁸ Martin Kriesberg, “Soviet News in the ‘New York Times’,” *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 10:4 (1946-1947): 540, accessed 20 November 2016 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2745705>.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Herrmann, *Helen Keller: A Life*, 136.

⁴¹ Ibid., 137.

accomplished author, the newspaper suggested that Keller was a deaf and blind woman who was unable to form original ideas and descriptions of her own world. *The Nation* may have been the first major newspaper to publish an article that publicly criticized Keller's disabilities—it certainly was not the last.

The Brooklyn Eagle newspaper, mentioned earlier, had the most notorious series of attacks. For example, one article marked Keller's political leaning a mistake that sprang out of "the manifest limitations of her development."⁴² Essentially, the article stated that Keller made a mistake for choosing a political ideology that was deemed wrong by the journalist. This mistake, according to the journalist, was caused by Keller's disabilities that limited her aptitude in creating informed political opinions. This attack on Keller is important because it shows how newspapers used Keller's disabilities as a means to discredit her political ideology. As mentioned earlier, another attack launched by *The Brooklyn Eagle* concerned an editor that paid Keller many compliments. After the encounter with the editor, Keller commented: "now that I have come out for socialism he reminds me and the public that I am blind and deaf and especially liable to error."⁴³ This passage reveals a crucial aspect in how Keller's reception changed over time. Before her socialist ideology was publicly known, the editor received her positively. Afterwards, Keller was received negatively by the same editor and, as previously stated, called her "blind and deaf and especially liable to error."⁴⁴ The most interesting part of the newspaper's attack was that the editor favored Keller when she was working on behalf of the blind. There is no doubt that this reinforced the public receiving Keller as a disabled woman.

Keller responded to the *ad hominem* attacks of *The Brooklyn Eagle* by writing:

Oh, ridiculous Brooklyn Eagle! What an ungallant bird it is!
...The Eagle and I are at war. I hate the system which it
represents, apologizes for and upholds. When it fights back, let
it fight fair. Let it attack my ideas and oppose the aims and
arguments of Socialism. It is not fair fighting or good argument
to remind me and others that I cannot see or hear. I can read. I
can read all the socialist books I have time for... If the editor of
the Brooklyn Eagle should read some of them, he might be a
wiser man and make a better newspaper. If I ever contribute to

⁴² Keller, "How I Became a Socialist," n.p.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

the Socialist movement the book that I sometimes dream of, I know what I shall name it: Industrial Blindness and Social Deafness.⁴⁵

This response criticized *The Brooklyn Eagle* for attacking Keller's disabilities rather than the merits of Socialism or her political opinions. This trend of discrediting her political ideology by using her disabilities would unfortunately follow Keller for the rest of her life. Nevertheless, her statement that she was at war with *The Brooklyn Eagle* proved that she was willing to take on the newspapers. Conversely, this may have provoked more newspaper editors and journalists to condemn her.

Two years later, the *Detroit Free Press* was the next to attack Keller's political ideology. The newspaper published an article titled: "Wonderful But No Prophetess." The article stated:

As long as Miss Keller appears before the public in the light of a member of society struggling nobly under great handicaps and furnishing by her example inspiration for others who are unfortunately placed, she does a valuable work. But the moment she undertakes to speak ex cathedra, as it were, of all the political and social problems of the day, she receives a consideration out of all proportion to her fund of knowledge and judgment.

Helen Keller, struggling to point the way to the light for the deaf, dumb and blind is inspiring. Helen Keller preaching socialism; Helen Keller passing on the merits of the copper strike; Helen Keller sneering at the constitution of the United States; Helen Keller under these aspects is pitiful. She is beyond her depth. She speaks with the handicap of limitation which no amount of determination or science can overcome. Her knowledge is, and must be, almost purely theoretical, and unfortunately this world and its problems are both very practical.⁴⁶

Again, the newspapers preferred when Keller worked on behalf of the disabled. In fact, the *Detroit Free Press* commended Keller for this and even deemed it as

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ "Wonderful But No Prophetess," *Detroit Free Press*, 13 January 1914.

“valuable work.” The newspaper, however, did not find any value in her spirited support of striking workers or her socialist ideology. This can be seen when the newspaper continued the trend of using Keller’s disabilities as a means to discredit her.

The *Detroit Free Press* failed to see the weakness with their attack on Keller. For instance, the claims that the newspaper made countered one another. If Keller was unable to perceive the problems of this world, then how could she realize that those who were “unfortunately placed” suffered from problems that needed her guidance and assistance? When Keller put an effort to alleviate these problems, she was praised for doing “valuable” and “inspiring” work. These contradictory claims about Keller may have been done without any forethought, but it greatly affected her public reception. The newspapers positively reinforced the public’s view of Keller as a champion of the disabled rather than her role as a radical activist. Over time, the latter would be forgotten and the former would be memorialized.

Throughout all the years, “the power and tenacity Keller brought to bear in answering these attacks” was absolutely remarkable.⁴⁷ Keller “courageously defied any and all attempts to render her a second-class citizen. She would have her say and woe unto those who would try to silence her.”⁴⁸ Still, power and tenacity eventually fade over time and refuting those who dared to silence her became increasingly difficult to deal with—especially when criticism came from those closer to her.

After she publicly endorsed the NAACP in 1916, the *Selma Journal* published an editorial that described Keller’s letter as “full of untruths.”⁴⁹ The editorial continued by stating, “The people who did such wonderful work in training Miss Keller must have belonged to the old Abolition Gang for they seemed to have thoroughly poisoned her mind against her own people.”⁵⁰ Continuing with the attack that Keller cannot form her own political opinions, the *Selma Journal* also accused her of turning against Southerners. As mentioned earlier, Keller faced difficulty reconciling her own ideology with Southern politics. This caused conflict with her immediate family, specifically her mother. All of this combined eventually led to Keller slowly restraining her activism.

The AFB was another crucial factor that inhibited Keller’s activism. After Keller publicly supported Elizabeth Gurley Flynn in 1955, the executive director of the organization said that: “Helen Keller’s habit of playing around

⁴⁷ Rosenthal, “The Politics of Helen Keller,” n.p.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Nielsen, *Radical Lives*, 39.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

with communists and near communists has long been a source of embarrassment to her conservative friends."⁵¹ This statement was meant to console AFB donors and supporters who found offense in Keller's actions. Since Keller was the leading public figure of the AFB, the loss of major supporters due to her political ideology would have been detrimental for the organization. Moreover, Keller's financial security was dependent on the AFB, so she had no choice but to restrain her political activism.

Fortunately for Keller, limiting her radical politics came at an opportune time as the events of the Second Red Scare intensified. Similar to its predecessor, the Second Red Scare saw the increased influence of one man: Joseph McCarthy. McCarthy instigated fear of Soviet subversives living in the country. Like Palmer, most of McCarthy's threats were insubstantial. However, throughout the country, those who prescribed to McCarthyism instigated communist witch-hunts. The most notorious of these witch-hunts were conducted by the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Of the two, only the FBI conducted surveillance on Keller.⁵² Though McCarthy's claims were largely insubstantial, it is important to note that there were actual threats that existed. For example, the Soviet Union successfully detonated a nuclear bomb and the Chinese Civil War ended with a communist victory. These domestic and global threats combined to create anti-communist and anti-socialist fervor within the United States.

Although the Second Red Scare caused nationwide hysteria, Keller and her political ideology were mostly unaffected by the witch-hunts. Her public support for a *New York Times* editorial condemning McCarthy is evidence of this. McCarthy did not attack Keller for her political ideology after she praised and supported the editorial. Even more interesting is that "McCarthy attacked many for reasons far less significant than he could have claimed for Helen."⁵³ To add to this, those who investigated Keller, "easily found statements of her progressive political interests that in others would have been highly suspect."⁵⁴ Keller was invincible to the leading figure of the Second Red Scare.

This invincibility, however, stemmed from Keller's reception as a deaf and blind woman who overcame her disabilities. At seventy-two years of age, Keller had lived most of her life in stardom. With this, she was able to gain admiration that eventually "ensured her legal safety and public reputation" during

⁵¹ Herrmann, *Helen Keller: A Life*, 282.

⁵² Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Helen Keller," accessed 1 December <https://vault.fbi.gov/Helen%20Keller/Helen%20Keller%20Part%201%20of%201/view>.

⁵³ Nielsen, *Radical Lives*, 112.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

the witch-hunts.⁵⁵ Although this protected Keller from McCarthy, HUAC, and the FBI, her reception as a deaf and blind woman “kept her from the public political participation she desired.”⁵⁶ Eventually, this reception “confined her to issues pertaining [only] to blindness.”⁵⁷ This forever shaped how the public perceived Keller.

By the end of the Second Red Scare, Keller’s radical politics and activism were overshadowed by her reputation as a deaf and blind woman. In 1954, she received a nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize as an acknowledgment for her work with the disabled. Although the nomination was well deserved, it moved Keller’s radical life further into the obscure. Since the nomination “memorialize[d] Keller as an apolitical woman who was loved internationally for her cheery countenance in the face of adversity,” it reinforced the public’s reception of her as only a deaf and blind woman.⁵⁸ In addition to this, Keller’s confinement to issues pertaining only to blindness led her to accepting more requests from the AFB to embark on international goodwill tours. The tours made life increasingly difficult for Keller and she eventually had to limit her travels throughout the following years. In 1961, Keller suffered a stroke that forced her to retire from public life.⁵⁹ Sadly, she “experienced numerous other strokes, difficulties with diabetes, and largely lived in her wheelchair and bed” over the next seven years.⁶⁰ On June 1, 1968, Helen Keller passed away.

The obituary written for Keller in the *New York Times* perfectly portrayed how she was perceived during her time. The obituary states: “Helen Keller, who overcame blindness and deafness to become a symbol of the indomitable human spirit, died this afternoon in her home here. She was 87 years old.”⁶¹ It is clear that there was no specific mention of Keller’s accomplishments as a radical activist in her obituary. A short biography about Keller accompanied the obituary in an article titled “Triumph Out of Tragedy.” The article examined Keller’s life in nearly four thousand words and placed a heavy emphasis on her overcoming her disabilities. Only one hundred and forty-two of these words were used to describe Keller’s political life. The article stated:

These influences, in turn, led her to read Marx and Engels in German Braille, and in 1909 she joined the Socialist party in

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 116.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ “Helen Keller, 87, Dies,” *The New York Times*, 2 June 1968.

Massachusetts. For many years she was an active member, writing incisive articles in defense of Socialism, lecturing for the party, supporting trade unions and strikes and opposing American entry into World War I. She was among those Socialists who welcomed the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia in 1917.

Although Miss Keller's Socialist activities diminished after 1921, when she decided that her chief life work was to raise funds for the American Foundation for the Blind, she was always responsive to Socialist and Communist appeals for help in causes involving oppression or exploitation of labor. As late as 1957 she sent a warm greeting to Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, the Communist leader, then in jail on charges of violating the Smith Act.⁶²

There was no mention of Keller's achievements as a feminist or pacifist. Her work with several organizations, besides the AFB, was also excluded. The article did not provide an appropriate coverage of Keller's accomplishments throughout her life. Instead, the newspaper journalist chose to write a story that thousands of people have already known. Repeatedly, Keller is only defined as a deaf and blind woman who overcame her disabilities. This is still the case today.

In 2009, Senator Mitch McConnell declared, "The story of Helen Keller inspires us all."⁶³ Clearly, McConnell had no awareness of the full story behind Keller's life; for if he did, he would certainly not support her radical politics or activism. Though McConnell's statement may be humorous, it reflects a sad reality in the present reception of Keller. The image of Keller as a deaf and blind woman, rather than a radical activist, has prevailed in today's society. Even worse, people in the present-day fixate on the "miracle" of Keller's education and hold her in a "state of permanent childhood" while ignoring a "passionate political life that spanned much of the twentieth century."⁶⁴ A closer examination of Keller's present reception confirms this.

The previous statement from Senator McConnell was from a ceremony commemorating Keller. The ceremony, held inside the Capitol building, was to

⁶² Alden Whitman, "Triumph Out of Tragedy," *The New York Times*, 2 June 1968.

⁶³ "Helen Keller statue unveiled at Capitol," CNN (Washington D.C.), 7 October 2009, n.p, accessed 1 December 2016 <http://www.cnn.com/2009/US/10/07/HELEN.KELLER.STATUE/index.html>.

⁶⁴ Ernest Freeberg, "The History of Disability by Kim E. Nielsen," *The American Historical Review* 111: 1 (February 2006): 221, accessed 16 October 2016 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/ahr.111.1.221>.

unveil a bronze statue of Keller in the National Statuary Hall. The statue depicts a seven-year-old Keller standing beside a waterspout with the inscription “W-A-T-E-R” underneath. The statue symbolizes how Keller is remembered today. As previously discussed, people often fixate on Keller’s education and usually hold her in a “state of permanent childhood.”⁶⁵ The statue is a perfect representation of Keller’s present reception because it fulfills both criteria. Furthermore, it is unfortunate that the statue reinforces an “image of Helen Keller as a gilded, eternal child...at the highest levels of U.S. society.” To make matters worse, “Neither the statue itself nor its inscription provides any inkling that the sixty-plus years of Keller’s adult life were of any particular political import.” If the government wanted truly to commemorate Keller, an inscription that highlighted her remarkable achievements as a political activist is needed. This, however, would probably cause an uproar from people who oppose having a commemorative statue of a radical socialist inside the Capitol building—meanwhile, eight statues of Confederate leaders and officers stand beside Keller at the National Statuary Hall.

The statue in the Capitol building is not the only government-sponsored commemoration of Keller. In 1980, the United States Postal Service (USPS) issued a postage stamp bearing an image of Keller and Sullivan. The release was accompanied with a description of the two women. The USPS wrote:

With Anne Sullivan as her teacher and constant companion, Helen Keller overcame the challenge of blindness and deafness to show the world that people with disabilities can lead full lives, make outstanding contributions, and bring hope to everyone. After graduating from Radcliffe College, Keller devoted her life to helping others, writing and speaking on behalf of the disabled and on other social issues such as women’s rights and racial equality. In 1924, Keller and Sullivan started their association with the American Foundation for the Blind, serving together as counselors and advocates for the rest of their lives.⁶⁶

This description is undoubtedly better than most. It recognized Keller’s life as an adult and even included her devotion to social issues. Still, the description strengthens Keller’s legacy as a deaf and blind woman. This is done by beginning

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ United States Postal Service, “Women on Stamps,” accessed 1 December 2016 <http://about.usps.com/publications/pub512/welcome.htm>.

the description with Keller's success in overcoming her disabilities and then ending with her work for the AFB. This effects the reader by forcing him or her to acknowledge that Keller was a deaf and blind woman. The middle of the description, which recognized Keller's adult life and devotion to social issues, is almost useless because the beginning and the end guided and reinforced the readers into the deaf and blind narrative.

Another government-sponsored commemoration of Keller is the Alabama state quarter. The coin portrays an adult Keller with her name in English and in braille.⁶⁷ The Alabama state quarter is unique because it is the first and only circulated coin to use braille. The inclusion of braille on the coin is certainly merited, but it has the unintended consequence of reminding the public that Keller was blind. Another characteristic that makes the coin unique is its portrayal of Keller. The engraver, Norman E. Nemeth, decided to break from custom by portraying Keller as an adult. This is significant because it prevents the public from holding her in a "state of permanent childhood."⁶⁸ Although an adult portrayal of Keller is a step in the right direction, it is not enough.

Throughout the nation, countless institutions are named after Keller. Many of these institutions are elementary schools. The focus of this examination, however, will be on Keller Junior High. On the school's website, it states that the building was named after: "Helen Keller, an American author and lecturer who was deaf and blind from infancy."⁶⁹ This statement, though factual, is a misrepresentation of Keller. If generously assessed, the statement only covers about twenty-five years of her life. This means that Keller's radical politics and activism are completely ignored by the school that bears her name.

In order to understand Keller, school administrators and teachers were interviewed. The questions that were asked were: "Without doing any research, what do you know about Helen Keller in a sentence or two?" "Do you teach your students about Keller?" and "What and how do you teach about her?" Only two teachers responded. The first teacher wrote:

Helen Keller was born in the South to wealthy, educated parents and became deaf and blind due to an illness. She was taught to read and write by Anne Sullivan and graduated from college. She went on to graduate from college and support

⁶⁷ United States Mint, "50 State Quarters Program," accessed 1 December 2016 https://www.usmint.gov/about_the_mint/CoinLibrary/.

⁶⁸ Freeberg, "History of Disability," n.p.

⁶⁹ "About our school," Keller Junior High School, accessed 1 December 2016, <https://keller.sd54.org/resources/about-our-school/>.

suffrage for women. Helen Keller has been taught during March, Women in History month, using PhotoStory in my social studies classes.⁷⁰

The second teacher wrote:

Helen Keller to me is heroic from the strides she took as a child to overcome the extreme adversity she faced being deaf and blind. Her teacher, Annie Sullivan, helped her become not just a functioning member of society but one that contributed to it as well. I have also read that she had some socialist views but I am unsure of the validity of those claims. I wouldn't say there is a day specifically set aside to talk about her, but certainly during "teachable moments" as well as when students ask about her.⁷¹

Both teachers immediately identified Keller's disabilities and education. This supports the reception of Keller as a deaf and blind woman. It also maintains the argument that people are fixated on the "miracle" of her education. Another thing that was acknowledged was Keller's contributions to society. It is important to note that the second teacher was unsure whether Keller was actually a socialist. Of the two, only the first teacher dedicated a lesson to Keller. These two responses are important in understanding how Keller is received today because the teachers' knowledge of Keller, which was unwillingly shaped by pre-existing notions of her, will be passed on to a new generation of students. If this cycle continues, Keller will only be remembered as a deaf and blind woman who overcame her disabilities. It is imperative that all individuals, especially teachers, fully understand Keller's life. This is easier said than done, especially when one considers the amount of literature available on Keller.

As previously stated, there is more literature that focuses solely on Keller's disabilities rather than on her political activism. Most of this literature was written for elementary school children instead of adults. This means that the story of Helen Keller was likely introduced to people for the first time during childhood. Since the literature for children focused exclusively on Keller's disabilities, more people grew up being familiar with this specific narrative. The question that must be raised is: Why is this so?

⁷⁰ Shan Haupt, e-mail message to author, 30 November 2016.

⁷¹ David Stephens, e-mail message to author, 30 November 2016.

There are two main factors that can explain why children only receive this specific narrative of Keller: age-appropriateness and morals. First, many people do not consider radical politics and activism as age-appropriate for children. These people are neither correct nor wrong. It is definitely possible to teach radical politics and activism to children in an age-appropriate manner. To think otherwise would be insulting to the skill and creativity of our teachers. Second, teachers often use the familiar narrative of Keller as a way to teach children the morals of perseverance and hard work in the face of adversity. This is not the only valuable moral that can be learned from Keller's story. For instance, Keller displayed courage when she stood up for what she truly believed in, even if it meant facing criticism. She also showed tolerance when she supported traditionally oppressed groups. The number of moral lessons that can be learned from examining Keller's life is countless. Despite all of this, children still receive a diluted version of Keller's story and grow up only knowing very little of it. This is an important factor to recognize when considering how Keller is remembered today.

The literature created for adults also focuses heavily on Keller's disabilities rather than her radical politics or activism. Most popular literature about Keller would most likely fall under the biographical realm. Two biographers of Keller, Nielsen and Herrman, have already been discussed. Both of these authors were able to spread awareness of Keller's radical politics and activism with their books. Besides the two, another author did the same: James Loewen.

In *Lies My Teacher Told Me*, Loewen surveyed the content of high school history textbooks. In the first chapter, he discusses the problem of heroification, which he defined as a "degenerative process" that turns individuals into "pious, perfect creatures without conflicts, pain, credibility, or human interest."⁷² Loewen argues that heroification distorted how individuals receive Keller. Because of this, he believes that not much is known about Keller other than the fact that she was a deaf and blind woman. The rest of the chapter is dedicated to discussing Keller's radical politics and activism. Loewen's book, a national bestseller, has brought new interest and popularity to Keller's story. There is no doubt that it is changing how she is remembered today. Including the two biographies, *Lies My Teacher Told Me* is one of few the books that preserve the true legacy of Helen Keller.

Although Loewen's book had high readership, it admittedly never entered popular culture. Examining popular culture is one of the most convincing

⁷²James W. Loewen, *Lies My Teacher Told Me* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007), 11.

methods to understand how a historical figure is perceived. Throughout the years, Keller has appeared in American popular culture through various representations in media and even in conversational humor.

On the Broadway stage, Keller and Sullivan were depicted in *The Miracle Worker*. The play was based on Keller's autobiography and portrayed her as a "wild child" learning to overcome her disabilities. Although the play focused on less than ten years of Keller's life, *The Miracle Worker* won four Tony Awards, which included the awards for Best Play and Best Actress. Furthermore, one film and two television adaptations were created. The film won Best Actress and Best Supporting Actress at the Academy Awards. The overwhelming success of the play and its adaptations have definitely reinforced the perception of Keller as a deaf and blind woman. In music, Keller is a popular figure to use in song lyrics. Popular artists like Chance the Rapper, DJ Khaled, Eminem, and 3Oh!3 have all used Helen Keller as a substitute for being unaware or oblivious of a situation. For example, in Chance the Rapper's "Windows" he states, "How you don't see us can't hear us, you Helen Keller." Not only do these artists remind their fans that Keller was deaf and blind, they also propagate the notion that it is acceptable to make fun of her disabilities—this is explored further with the Helen Keller joke.

It is unfortunate how "one of the primary means by which popular culture maintains our shared memory of Helen Keller is through her own genre of jokes."⁷³ The jokes often follow a formulaic set-up that end in an allusion to her blindness or deafness. Example: Question: How did Helen Keller burn her face? Answer: Answering the iron! In order to understand the punchline to a Helen Keller joke, "one must know who Helen Keller is and what she represents: a deaf-blind heroine."⁷⁴ This acknowledgment, combined with her status as "the dominant cultural figure of U.S. disability," makes the jokes possible.⁷⁵ The Helen Keller joke is the most convincing piece of evidence toward Keller's reception as a deaf and blind woman. As long as these jokes remain in popular culture, her legacy as a radical activist will never be venerated.

A sad irony reveals itself within the legacy of Keller: the portion of her life that she wanted to be remembered for was the reason it was forgotten. Over time, the negative attention towards Keller's radical political ideology and activism diminished her legacy to only being known as deaf and blind. The world cannot afford to fixate on two words that describe only the first seven years of her life. In the eighty years after the "miracle" at the waterspout, Helen Keller

⁷³ Nielsen, *Radical Lives*, 128.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

became a college graduate, author, socialist, and radical activist who tirelessly advocated for feminism, pacifism, and civil rights. It is time to look beyond Keller's disabilities and acknowledge her accomplishments in order to restore her legacy. This involves acknowledging Keller's radical politics and activist life. In other words, Keller's disabilities do not define her legacy, we do.

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End of an ERA in Illinois: Schlafly and the Power of Anti-ERA Activism, 1972-82

By Tyler Petersen

The voice of the people is the cornerstone of American democracy, and at the heart of the public's voice is grassroots activism. For women of the 1970s and 1980s, it provided a route to vocalize their concerns about the nation. For Anna Graham and other women activists, grassroots activism inspired pride and confidence in women's abilities on the political stage. As Graham wrote: "Really I was pleased that we did so well, considering the lack of political experience most of the opposing women have."¹ The campaign Graham and many other women joined was the struggle against the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), which pitted established national and state grassroots feminist organizations against the grassroots conservative groups born out of the culture wars of the 1960s. The competition between these groups eventually concluded with a victory for the conservative effort, which had succeeded in killing the amendment. In the fight to block the ERA, one organization stood at the helm of the anti-ERA movement: STOP ERA. With its witty and charismatic leader, Phyllis Schlafly, STOP ERA achieved its goal by shifting its strategies and rhetoric to meet the challenges of the ERA campaign. This paper will concentrate on STOP ERA and its eventual success in blocking the passage of the ERA, looking beyond the activism of Phyllis Schlafly.

The ERA was conceived in 1920, alongside legislation that would grant women the vote, by Alice Paul and the National Women's Party (NWP) and, in 1923, the NWP convinced Congress to consider the amendment. It read: "Men and women shall have equal rights throughout the United States and in every place subject to its jurisdiction, Congress shall have the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation." At the time, it never received ratification from Congress. Through a span of almost five decades, support of the ERA would ebb and reignite, until June 1970, when the ERA again came before the House of Representatives and was passed by a 350 to 15 vote. ERA would pass to the Senate, where it remained for nearly two years before reaching the floor for debate. Though it was stalled, with a vote of 84 to 8, the Senate passed the

¹ Donald T. Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism: A Woman's Crusade* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 223-224.

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ERA on March 22, 1972. The ERA received proposal to the states, and the race was on for ratification.² In the states, it seemed the ERA was off to a quick ratification. By 1977, 35 of the 38 states required for ratification had passed the ERA in their state legislatures. Illinois was among those states to not ratify the ERA and was the last of the industrialized northern states to hold out on the amendment. Ratification would never come in Illinois, due largely in part to the work of Phyllis Schlafly and the STOP ERA movement, which halted the progress of the ERA and ensured that no state would ratify after 1977. Even an extension to the ratification window, granted by Congress in 1979, could not gain the ERA any more states for ratification, and the ERA would officially burn out in 1982.

Historians and political scientists have written a good deal about the debates over both the ERA and the STOP ERA movement. Historians traced the beginning of the anti-ERA campaign back to the birth of the women's conservative movement in the 1950s. Out of the fight against communism and the push for traditional family values, historians such as Michelle M. Nickerson argued that the conservative women's movement gave women a place on the American political stage in the immediate post-WWII era.³ Historians, such as Anne Enke, wrote about the importance of grassroots activism as well as the need to define the activists of each situation. Enke explored the women and LGBTQ communities of the Midwest to find how space is important for inspiring activism. Enke's study held true for the women of STOP ERA as well. Space and context defined how the women involved in anti-ERA activism operated, whether it be in the public eye or in the office of an Illinois politician. Activists needed to learn tactics and rhetoric that would reach a general audience as well as sophisticated political thinkers.

Most historians examined the anti-ERA movement on a national scale and explained it as a success of grassroots activism or the doing of state governments that harbored traditionalist or sexist opinions, but the scope of the anti-ERA campaign cannot be so broad.⁴ Political scientist Jane J. Mansbridge attempted to chart the reasons for the failure of the ERA campaign in Illinois as

² Jane J. Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 8-12.

³ Works on the history of the development of the grassroots conservative movement include: Donald T. Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism*; Michelle M. Nickerson, *Mothers of Conservatism: Women and the Postwar Right* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).

⁴ Works that examine anti-ERA campaigns on a national scale include: Andrew Hartman, *A War for the Soul of America: A History of the Culture Wars* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015); Donald T. Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism*; Jane J. Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA*; Ronnee Schreiber, *Righting Feminism: Conservative Women and American Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

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a case study, but stopped short in her arguments about STOP ERA in favor of discussing the hostilities among members of the pro-ERA movement. Some historians, such as Andrew Hartman and Ronnee Schreiber, examined the STOP ERA movement through only the actions, words, and publications of Phyllis Schlafly.⁵ The ERA campaign of Illinois was a complex time in the struggle for ERA ratification, and it presently provides a quality case study for both sides of the ERA fight.

Examining the STOP ERA movement in Illinois begins with the sources. Newspaper articles, correspondences among members of anti-ERA organizations, and anti-ERA literature provide the message and the chronological story of the anti-ERA activists. To understand these anti-ERA organizations fully, however, one cannot avoid discussing the work of Phyllis Schlafly, the undeniable head of the STOP ERA movement. Her personal papers and publications, recorded and archived by the Eagle Forum, clearly show distinct shifts in these strategies and rhetorical devices used by Schlafly and the STOP ERA activists as the objectives of the anti-ERA forces either changed or presented a new challenge.

These sources indicate that the Illinois campaign was unique due to its political landscape. First, the ranks of the Illinois STOP ERA organizations must be explored: who was involved in STOP ERA, how were they active in the anti-ERA organizations and what were the reasons they had for campaigning against the ERA. These ranks featured political conservatives, American housewives, and fundamentalist and orthodox religious groups. Upon defining the people involved in these groups and their anti-ERA contributions, their reasons for involvement can be determined and, with that, the rhetorical strategies used by STOP ERA organizations to balance the many motives of its members. This culminates in determining how these groups galvanized their motives into cohesive rhetorical strategies that worked to attract the votes of Illinois General Assembly members, which completed the task of blocking ratification of the ERA in the state.

Expansion efforts by STOP ERA organizations meant reaching out to communities and finding a way to fold in those who supported the anti-ERA cause into the movement. In Illinois, STOP ERA members came from many social groups, primarily conservative Republicans, housewives and religious fundamentalists. Much of this expansion effort can be seen through the work of the upper management of the STOP ERA movement, Phyllis Schlafly and her

⁵ Works that attribute the success of the anti-ERA movement primarily to the work of Phyllis Schlafly alone: Andrew Hartman, *A War for the Soul of America*; Ronnee Schreiber, *Righting Feminism*.

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Eagle Forum. Through correspondence and publications of the Eagle Forum to homemakers, Republicans and religious leaders of Illinois, a greater network of anti-ERA activism was created to support the cause of stopping the amendment in the state legislature.

Jane Mansbridge stated it best; both pro-ERA and anti-ERA organizations had two goals: to survive and to either block or secure the passage of the ERA.⁶ Accomplishing the mission of blocking ERA was a natural goal of the STOP ERA movement, but surviving as a cohesive organization required adapting tactics and rhetoric to expand the organization, control public perception of the movement and establish a unified front against the ERA and pro-ERA activists. Meeting the demands of survival provided an interesting challenge for Illinois STOP ERA organizations, yet the anti-ERA forces seemed to have an answer for the unknowns that attempted to bar them in their path to blocking the amendment. Expansion was necessary to keep the movement alive and to bring in enough people to meet all the demands of public appearance and political activism. Controlling public perception is important, too, as anti-ERA organizations had to go beyond “going public” with their position on ERA, but also compete with pro-ERA activists, which meant anti-ERA forces needed to stay in a positive light and win over the public to continue pushing their message to the public and politicians. Pushing the anti-ERA agenda also required anti-ERA activists to unify their efforts and messages to avoid detracting from the progress of the anti-ERA movement as a whole.

Conservative Republicans built the core of the anti-ERA movement. From the earliest days of STOP ERA, Phyllis Schlafly’s message resonated with these conservatives best. Schlafly reached out to conservatives through her Eagle Forum, a formalized interest group established by Schlafly on the platform of “God, Family and Country,” and *The Phyllis Schlafly Report*, the monthly publication of the Eagle Forum.⁷ Founded in 1975, the Eagle Forum began with only Schlafly and her close women supporters from the National Federation of Republican Women. With headquarters in Alton, Illinois, the Eagle Forum’s close proximity to Illinois politics gave it an increased role in the campaign to stop ERA ratification in the state. The Eagle Forum attracted many who were familiar with politics into its membership. The women who stood alongside Schlafly had experience in political campaigns, both on the local and state level, and this contributed to the political actions in which the Eagle Forum became involved. The Eagle Forum, from memberships and subscriptions to *The*

⁶ Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA*, 165.

⁷ No Author, “Join Eagle Forum so you will have a voice at the U.S. Capitol and at State Capitols,” *Eagle Forum*, no date, accessed November 1, 2016, <http://www.eagleforum.org/misc/descript.html>.

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Phyllis Schlafly Report, collected a war chest, which it used in electioneering for politicians that supported the anti-ERA cause.⁸ Monetary donations from Eagle Forum members could be turned into political influence through the Eagle Forum's political action committee. An anonymous pro-ERA activist commented on the power of STOP ERA's electioneering efforts:

... pro-ERA senators, for example, suddenly started voting no after Mrs. Schlafly contributed \$300 to their campaigns. In those days, it took \$300 to buy a senator, \$100 to buy a representative.⁹

Anti-ERA politicians in the Illinois General Assembly provided the votes necessary to block the ERA from ratification in Illinois, which made the contributions of conservative members of the Eagle Forum a key piece of the STOP ERA movement.

By the end of the ERA campaign, Eagle Forum touted 60,000 members and, while a small political organization, Eagle Forum had gone from the alternative of conservatism to the mainstream of Republican politics.¹⁰ Expanding from an initial membership of a handful of Republican women to 60,000 was mainly due to publications like *The Phyllis Schlafly Report*. That tool allowed the Eagle Forum to reach out to conservatives across Illinois and eventually the nation. In 1974, subscriptions to *The Phyllis Schlafly Report* cost \$10 per year, which went directly to the Eagle Trust Fund. These newsletters also supplied a route for donating to the Eagle Forum's cause, which allowed conservatives who could not give physical support a chance to give their financial support.¹¹ Conservatives supplied a source of income and organization for the anti-ERA movement, but alone they could not produce enough bodies to present themselves or their argument on the political stage, which would require growth in the STOP ERA ranks.

While conservatives acted as the base of the Eagle Forum and the STOP ERA movement, housewives were the anti-ERA movement's primary candidates for further expansion. In the mind of the anti-ERA movement, it was the homemakers that stood to lose the most from the ERA. Phyllis Schlafly, in

⁸ "Eagle Forum Summary," *The Center for Responsive Politics*, accessed November 2, 2016, <https://www.opensecrets.org/pacs/lookup2.php?strID=C00103937>.

⁹ Interview with Anonymous pro-ERA activist, interview with author, no date, in Jane J. Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 158.

¹⁰ Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism*, 220-221.

¹¹ Phyllis Schlafly, "Conservatives, Let Down Your Nets for the Catch," *The Phyllis Schlafly Report* 7, no. 8 (March 1974): 1-4.

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her March 1981 issue of *The Phyllis Schlafly Report*, provided a list of necessary changes that would be made to American society to accommodate the ERA. This report discussed how the ERA would upend the function of the American family, as women would need to be drafted, laws surrounding maternity leave would become more stringent, divorce laws would become strictly no-fault and moral standards like rape laws and prison segregation by sex would need to be reevaluated.¹² The changes that Schlafly warned against would affect the housewife seriously, as it redefines how the domestic sphere would function in the eyes of the government, where these homemakers traditionally had control and were afforded certain benefits under the law. American housewives were what Schlafly classified as the “positive woman,” which she outlined in her 1977 book, *The Power of the Positive Woman*.

The first requirement for the acquisition of power by the Positive Woman is to understand the differences between men and women. Your outlook on life, your faith your behavior, your potential for fulfillment, all are determined by the parameters of your original premise. The Positive Woman starts with the assumption that the world is her oyster. She rejoices in the creative capability within her body and the power potential of her mind and spirit. She understands that men and women are different, and that those very differences provide the key to her success as a person and fulfillment as a woman.¹³

Schlafly argued that women needed to embrace the power of positive freedom, the freedom to act upon one’s own free will. To Schlafly, this positive freedom came in recognizing that women’s physical and emotional differences provide them the opportunity to carve their own path that is unique from men. The housewife fit the mold of Schlafly’s “positive woman,” as homemakers chose to accept their differences from men and take pride in having and raising children as well as caring for the home and securing a large role in the domestic sphere. These messages called for fear of women’s liberation through the ERA and the empowerment of women through the positive liberty to be a housewife.

In Illinois, the housewife played an active role in advocating for the STOP ERA movement, far beyond vocal support. Schlafly worked to bring

¹² Phyllis Schlafly, “How ERA Would Change Federal Laws,” *The Phyllis Schlafly Report* 15, no. 4 (Nov. 1981): 1-4.

¹³ Phyllis Schlafly, *The Power of the Positive Woman* (New York: Arlington House, 1977).

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housewives into the anti-ERA force through *The Phyllis Schlafly Report* and her work to inspire acceptance of positive liberty in women, but when these homemakers joined the movement, Schlafly had jobs for them as well. In the anti-ERA movement, housewives stood to be some of the best activists for the cause. Work included “phoning talk shows, sending letters to the editors of local papers and writing state legislators.”¹⁴ The housewives of the STOP ERA movement were also a pivotal part of demonstrations against the ERA, and these women found the empowerment that Schlafly spoke of in *The Power of the Positive Woman*. Demonstrations in Illinois capitalized on the traditional gender roles of women, featuring in one such instance housewives going to the Illinois General Assembly to deliver homemade baked goods along with STOP ERA literature.¹⁵ One activist, Anna Graham, wrote Schlafly about her happiness with the success of the anti-ERA movement, though she and her fellow activists were only rookies to political activism:

We anticipated the proponents accurately and matched them point by point – youth, blacks, a lawyer, a housewife, a working gal, elderly, etc.... Really I was so pleased that we did so well, considering the lack of political experience most of the opposing women have.¹⁶

Housewives were a key piece of the anti-ERA movement, especially in Illinois where they had roles to play in political activism, but they brought access to another Illinois resource that gave STOP ERA an added boost in (wo)manpower and organizational and financial stability: Illinois religious communities.

Organized religion, in most cases, took a serious disliking to the ERA and the cause of pro-ERA groups. These organizations, particularly those of fundamentalist belief, did not agree with the tone of pro-ERA activists, the implied freedoms women would receive, and social and moral changes that would need to be made to accommodate the ratification of the ERA. Fundamentalists took offense primarily to the discussion of abortion rights under the ERA; with the passage of the new amendment, women would have the same access to medical care decisions as men, leaving the door open to legalized abortion nationwide that was protected by the federal government. Championing this interpretation of the ERA was NOW, the National Organization for Women,

¹⁴ Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA*, 174.

¹⁵ Rosalind Rosenberg, *Divided Lives: American Women in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992), 225.

¹⁶ Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism*, 223-224.

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which decided to make women's issues like abortion a key part of the ERA debate. Jane Mansbridge states that this made NOW a multi-issue organization, with a platform that could not possibly encompass the diverse opinions of the people of Illinois without offending some and harming the pro-ERA cause. ERA Illinois had appealed largely to Roman Catholic communities and commented on NOW's decision to use controversial issues as a part of the pro-ERA argument stating:

I honestly feel that they don't have the very best interest for the Equal Rights Amendment in mind as they implement this strategy [referring to the introduction of abortion as an argument point]. That they simply want to make their mark, that they want to, if possible, intimidate those people who seem to be obstacles to implementing their women's program.¹⁷

NOW and other feminist organizations had a history of alienating religious women from feminist causes in the years leading up to the ERA campaign. According to Mary Henold in her book, *Catholic and Feminist: The Surprising History of the American Catholic Feminist Movement*, throughout the late sixties and into the early seventies, feminist organizations were "not welcoming to women who wanted to pursue feminism from a religious faith perspective." Georgia Fuller, who served as NOW's head for the Task Force on Women and Religion, admitted that she herself was a "closet Christian" as a feminist activist in the early seventies.¹⁸ Where NOW failed to reach out to religious communities, anti-ERA forces rushed to fold fundamentalist communities and orthodox religious groups into their movement.

Fundamentalist religious organizations offered a series of advantages to STOP ERA. First and foremost, was the number of people already committed to the cause due to their faith. Religious groups met weekly as part of religious doctrine, providing a forum to pass the anti-ERA message and information about demonstrations or group actions to their organization's devotees. These people were also likely to be women that fell under the demographic of housewife or Schlafly's "positive woman." For instance, Christian fundamentalists follow the Bible to the letter, which in places orders women to be submissive to men, such as 1 Corinthians 11:9, stating "for indeed man was not created for the woman's

¹⁷ Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA*, 170.

¹⁸ Mary J. Henold, *Catholic and Feminist: The Surprising History of the American Catholic Feminist Movement* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 218.

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sake, but woman for the man's sake.”¹⁹ Through a literal interpretation of the Bible, fundamentalist Christian women would quickly grasp to the label of Schlafly’s “positive woman,” since these women take pride in choosing to follow their religious doctrine. Second was financial stability; religious groups collected money from donations or tithes, which could in turn become donations to the anti-ERA forces.

Phyllis Schlafly herself had long correspondence with religious leaders throughout Illinois, showing a clear link between fundamentalist and orthodox religion and the STOP ERA movement. Schlafly, like ERA Illinois, had success with members of the Roman Catholic Church, specifically His Eminence John Cody, Archbishop of Chicago. In a letter from June 7, 1980, Schlafly wrote to Cardinal Cody thanking him for his vocal support of STOP ERA and the efforts of the Cardinal in clarifying the Roman Catholic Church’s position on the ERA in Illinois, clouded, Schlafly stated, by “ordination-seeking nuns” and false pro-ERA pamphlets that quote Pope John XXIII as a proponent for ERA.²⁰ STOP ERA also found a home with Orthodox Jewish communities, in both Illinois and on a national level. In a June 20, 1980 telegram from Rabbi Abraham B. Hecht of the influential rabbinical court, the Rabbinical Alliance of America, Rabbi Hecht congratulated Schlafly on her victory over the ERA the “power seekers and misguided liberals” of the pro-ERA movement.²¹ In Chicago, Illinois, Rabbi Yitzchok Bider proved a useful connection to Schlafly, who described Rabbi Bider as “enthusiastic, smart and family oriented” in a June 28, 1977 letter.²² African-American congregations also turned to the anti-ERA cause, such as Reverend Henry Mitchell, who was pictured coordinating with staff to organize activities in support of stopping the ERA at his Black Star Mission Church in the Southside of Chicago.²³ As pro-ERA organizations alienated religious groups and religious fundamentalists, the STOP ERA movement appealed to them through their religious beliefs that naturally pitted them against the ERA. Schlafly and STOP ERA had collected a number of supporters from a diverse range of religious communities. For the anti-ERA forces, there was a clear connection between the effort to block ERA and religion.

¹⁹ *The Bible*. New American Standard (La Habra: Lockman Foundation, 1977), 1 Corinthians 11:9.

²⁰ Letter from Phyllis Schlafly to John Cardinal Cody, June 7, 1980, Illinois ERA Action Folder, ERA Files, Eagle Forum Archives.

²¹ Letter from Rabbi Abraham Hecht, the Rabbinical Alliance of America, to Phyllis Schlafly, June 20, 1980, Illinois ERA Action Folder, ERA Files, Eagle Forum Archives.

²² Letter from Phyllis Schlafly to Rabbi Yitzchok Bider, June 28, 1977, Illinois ERA Action Folder, ERA Files, Eagle Forum Archives.

²³ Picture of “Reverend Henry Mitchell with unidentified staff from his Black Star Mission, planning anti-ERA activities,” picture from Eagle Forum Archives, in Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism*, 178-179.

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Expansion was a requisite for survival of the STOP ERA movement, but it provided another challenge for Schlafly and her chief organizers to overcome: balancing the opinions of the diverse community they had attracted to their cause. Each group, conservatives, housewives and religious groups, brought along with it a new rationale for their opposition to the ERA. These reasons would need to be reviewed and approved for the agenda if the movement was to remain both unified and effective. Organizational unity in the anti-ERA coalition that Schlafly had formed in Illinois would prove a difficult task, but not one that Schlafly and her devout supporters could not surmount in the struggle to block the ERA.

Balancing motives was very delicate when it came to managing the interests of the religious groups involved in Illinois' STOP ERA organizations. Specifically, religious fundamentalists could provide both an argument that was appealing to religious politicians or an argument that was especially abrasive due to its harsh tone, such as a message depicting politicians as sinners, inspired by Satan or damned to Hell for their position on the ERA.²⁴ These religious communities of Illinois had an organization among themselves which encouraged the quick spread of this type of argument, evident in pamphlets circulated around fundamentalist communities like Rosemary Thomson's "A Christian View of the Equal Rights Amendment." Here, Thomson stated, "[a]s Christians, we ought to support laws that provide equal opportunity for women, but we must oppose a sweeping Constitutional change that would take away their individual choices and alter Americans' lifestyle. Jesus cautioned us about wolves in sheep's clothing... of Satan coming as an angel of light so even the elect will be deceived."²⁵ In this quote, a commitment to both Schlafly's ideal of the "positive woman" and Christian fundamentalism can be seen. Thomson argued on the loss of individual freedoms, promising that the ERA is a "wolf in sheep's clothing," which deluded politicians supported at the will of Satan himself. Politicians did not react well to having their morality called into question, which left religiously influenced members of Illinois anti-ERA groups as a liability when it came to accomplishing the ultimate goal: stopping ERA ratification in the Illinois General Assembly.

For Schlafly and the STOP ERA leadership, a solution needed to be found that would both repair the damage done by religious fundamentalists yet avoid alienating the fundamentalists from the rest of the anti-ERA cause. Here rhetorical strategy came in handy, as the STOP ERA movement navigated

²⁴ Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA*, 176-177.

²⁵ Rosemary Thomson, "A Christian View of the Equal Rights Amendment," no date, Illinois ERA Action Folder, ERA Files, Eagle Forum Archives.

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carefully between the desires of its religious members and the goal of halting ratification in Illinois. They chose to distance the cause from fundamentalist statements, but still recognizing fundamentalist tenacity in activism. While statements from fundamentalists were incendiary, Schlafly understood that attempting to control the words and actions of each of her followers would only cripple her cause, discouraging the religious base of STOP ERA from acting at all.²⁶ Where fundamentalists crossed a line, STOP ERA remained at an arm's length, protecting themselves from politicians' backlash while still allowing the fundamentalists to retain an active role in the movement. Schlafly allowed the anti-ERA religious communities to act on their own motives for halting the ERA, while still ensuring that each groups' motives did not detract from the goal of stopping ratification of the ERA.

Religious communities were not the only groups involved with the anti-ERA movement that fought for their own interests. The housewives who stood alongside STOP ERA also had their own motives behind their contributions to anti-ERA causes, which provided a different realm of challenges for Schlafly and STOP ERA leadership in Illinois. For housewives, STOP ERA represented their pro-family interests, protecting their roles and benefits in the home. Motherhood was important for housewives of the conservative movement. Historian Annelise Orleck is right to say that, for conservative housewives, a "good mother" meant order, stability, and quality values would be passed on to further generations of young Americans.²⁷ In this sentiment and Schlafly's model of the "positive woman," housewives took pride in their status and fought to protect that as their political interest. Housewives also had a responsibility to their family, which limited their involvement in the anti-ERA cause at the risk of losing the identity that made them so valuable to STOP ERA. These challenges presented from housewife involvement had to be negotiated in order to ensure that STOP ERA in Illinois remained fully unified, not sacrificing the strengths and benefits it received from housewives or other groups dedicated to the anti-ERA cause.

Inexperience was a major issue for housewives who chose to be at the forefront of anti-ERA activism; their inexperience led to errors typical of those new to navigating in the political arena. This lack of experience required additional leadership from the main office, which naturally spread resources thinner across Illinois. To accommodate this drain on resources, Schlafly and

²⁶ Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA*, 176-177.

²⁷ Annelise Orleck, "Good Motherhood as Patriotism: Mothers on the Right," *The Politics of Motherhood: Activist Voices from Left to Right*, eds. Alexis Jetter, Annelise Orleck, and Diana Taylor (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1997), 225.

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STOP ERA leadership needed to increase monetary contributions and new members joining the movement, which led to a shift in rhetoric to attract these needed resources. Rhetoric shifted to appeal to the identity of the mother, which is evident in the way Schlafly spoke to her followers. On many occasions, Schlafly would tout her own identity as a mother and housewife. At some events, Schlafly announced to crowds: “First of all, I would like to thank my husband Fred, for letting me come— I always like to say that because it makes the libs so mad!”²⁸ Statements like these from Schlafly show the pro-housewife rhetoric that became so common in the STOP ERA campaign.

This concentration on pro-mother and pro-family rhetoric also led to the creation of Schlafly’s “positive woman” in *The Power of the Positive Woman*. The image of the “positive woman” is meant to represent the empowered housewife, but the book is also filled with rhetoric appealing to the housewives’ fear of bad motherhood brought about by government interference in the institution of the American family. Schlafly wrote:

If fathers are not expected to stay home and care for their infant children, then neither should mothers be expected to do so; and, therefore, it becomes the duty of the government to provide kiddy-care centers to relieve mothers of that unfair and unequal burden.²⁹

Similar messages appeared throughout issues of *The Phyllis Schlafly Report*, in issues such as one titled “What’s Wrong with ‘Equal Rights’ for Women?” Here, Schlafly argued that the family is the “most basic unit of society,” where women had the “most precious and important right of all—the right to keep her own baby and to be supported and protected in the enjoyment of watching her baby grow and develop.”³⁰ To make up for the resource strain created by housewives, Schlafly and anti-ERA leadership shifted their rhetoric to appeal to and attract more housewives, bringing in new potentially donating members and encouraging participation and continued donations from previously enlisted anti-ERA housewives through the publications of STOP ERA leaders, replenishing revenue to the Eagle Trust Fund while still supplying a route for housewives to be involved with their interests at the head of the STOP ERA argument.

²⁸ Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism*, 247.

²⁹ Schlafly, *The Power of the Positive Woman*, 21.

³⁰ Phyllis Schlafly, “What’s Wrong with ‘Equal Rights’ for Women?,” *The Phyllis Schlafly Report* 5, no. 7 (1972): 1-4.

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Participation was not always easy for the housewife either. For housewives, pro-family values were important, which placed their role in the household in direct conflict with desire to be involved in the anti-ERA movement. Even for Phyllis Schlafly, this strain was apparent. Schlafly balanced not only management of the nationwide anti-ERA effort with her life at home, but also found time to work towards a law degree from Washington University. In Illinois, the struggle to be both a mother and an activist was felt primarily in presence at public events, such as rallies and demonstrations, which were key to spreading the anti-ERA message and putting on a public display for legislators. Where housewives sometimes fell short, other groups within STOP ERA had to take the lead, evident from rhetoric shifts that show the increasing need to push other groups into the public spotlight. To accommodate this need for demonstrators in the public eye, Illinois STOP ERA leadership turned to the religious communities and mothers with grown children. As Jane Mansbridge explained from her own experience with STOP ERA counter-rallies in Illinois:

Neither the media, the American public, nor most legislators were aware that most of the women who demonstrated against the ERA at state capitols across the country in the last years of the ERA struggle were fundamentalists brought there by their pastors. While the male ministers and bus drivers sat outside in the yellow busses, the women did their work under the rotunda... When I took part in NOW's June 1980 ERA demonstration in Springfield [IL], for example, I had no way of telling visually that the counterpickets—some young, some grandmothers, all wearing white and red dresses and sporting the traditional red hexagonal Stop sign of the 'anti' forces—were there under the auspices of the church.³¹

This increasing activity of religious organizations in the late stages of the anti-ERA movement sprouted primarily from two causes: Schlafly's religious rhetoric and the empowerment of religious conservatism under nationwide political actions from groups such as Rev. Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority.

Throughout the history of STOP ERA, Schlafly had tied her arguments against the ERA to the proposed amendment's undermining of the "laws and customs of [America's] Judeo-Christian civilization."³² By the late 1970s and

³¹ Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA*, 175.

³² Schlafly, "What's Wrong with 'Equal Rights' for Women?," *The Phyllis Schlafly Report* 5, no. 7 (Feb. 1972), 1-4.

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early 1980s, Falwell and his Moral Majority began to gain ground on the American political stage and were founded on many of the same beliefs as Schlafly's STOP ERA organizations, such as pro-family values, the immediate stop to abortion, and traditional gender roles. Rooted in evangelical and fundamentalist religion, the Moral Majority had instant success with the same religious communities in Illinois that Schlafly and STOP ERA leadership fought to attract.³³ Both the Moral Majority and STOP ERA had a vested interest in halting the ERA, which posed a threat to the values of both organizations' religious members. There is an evident link between Schlafly and Rev. Falwell's organization as well, as in the Moral Majority's "Top-Secret Battle Plan for 1982," the Moral Majority's strategy specifically referenced assisting STOP ERA in halting the ratification of the ERA.³⁴ Rhetorically, Schlafly would continue this relationship with the Moral Majority, though not explicitly. Schlafly never used her own religion as a bargaining chip for increasing membership or inspiring membership or inspiring anti-ERA activity, though a devout Catholic herself. STOP ERA messages never directly referenced religion, though they did make discreet connections to religious scripture, promoting this connection to religion while still keeping a clear distance. Schlafly's attachment with the Moral Majority provided a route for STOP ERA forces to appeal directly to various fundamentalist communities through Rev. Falwell and his followers' words without ever having to engage in the use of religion as a tool themselves, avoiding the threat of alienating certain religious groups from activity within STOP ERA. Seen in Illinois through the unidentifiable religious connection in Springfield demonstrators, it is clear the anti-ERA movement found power in religion by saying nothing at all.

Survival of STOP ERA in Illinois, which required expansion of membership and balancing challenges and interests that the diversity of the organizations caused, was necessary to achieve the anti-ERA movement's ultimate goal: preventing ratification of ERA. A good deal of the struggle to stop the ERA occurred in the chambers of the Illinois General Assembly, where politicians actually debated and voted on the topic of equal rights for women. Earning the votes of the state senators and representatives was necessary to end the ERA, and the same rhetorical strategies used to expand anti-ERA forces and balance the many needs of organizational survival were used by STOP ERA leadership to win over the assembly members.

³³ Doug Bantwart, "Jerry Falwell, the Rise of the Moral Majority, and the 1980 Election," *Western Illinois Historical Review* 5 (Spring 2013), 137-139, 143-144.

³⁴ John Saloma III, *Ominous Politics: The New Conservative Labyrinth* (New York: Farrer, Straus and Giroux, 1984).

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Illinois provided an interesting case politically for anti-ERA forces. According to a provision of Illinois' state constitution, a three-fifths supermajority was required from both houses of the General Assembly in order to ratify a constitutional amendment.³⁵ With 176 representatives and 59 senators making up the General Assembly at the time of ERA, STOP ERA required the nay vote of 24 senators and 71 representatives to ensure continued rejection of the ERA in Illinois. Though Illinois law gave a distinct advantage to anti-ERA supporters, rhetorical strategy was still required to attract votes and protect promised votes from pro-ERA influence. Rhetoric was the key to Phyllis Schlafly and STOP ERA's success in Illinois, to both garner favor of politicians and capitalize on opportunities left by mistakes made by pro-ERA supporters.

Keeping the votes of anti-ERA politicians was much easier than persuading pro-ERA politicians to change sides, yet it still was a challenge to fight off the pro-ERA pressure that was placed on anti-ERA-dedicated assembly members. For some anti-ERA legislators, their anti-ERA constituents convinced them to stay the course and stop the ERA:

The people who are anti-ERA in my district feel very, very intensely about it. And they will go out and they will work for or against people that are anti-ERA... They will work very hard. The people who are pro-ERA, you know, they are "pro but so what." So it is that intensity of feeling.³⁶

Illinois legislators were impressed by the tenacity of anti-ERA supporters and, in legislative districts where pro-ERA forces struggled to mobilize, the anti-ERA movement gained easy votes.

Other legislators faced pressures from pro-ERA activists, though, and rhetorical strategies that appealed to the politicians' humanity secured their votes in assembly sessions to come. Politicians who voted against the ERA received harsh criticism from pro-ERA forces, but were greeted warmly by STOP ERA, many who wrote "thank you" letters to the politicians. In 1973, Rep. John Edward Porter of Evanston voted against the ERA, contrary to the liberal beliefs of his district. Porter described the reactions from pro-ERA supporters as "a very large volume of mail... some being very shrill and even threatening." In that mail, however, was a letter from Phyllis Schlafly herself, on which Porter commented in a return letter: "I want you to know that your letter

³⁵ Constitution of the State of Illinois art. XIV section I subsection A.

³⁶ Interview with Anonymous anti-ERA Illinois legislator, interview with author, in Jane J. Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 176.

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was without question the nicest one that I received.”³⁷ Other politicians, such as Rep. Allan Schoeberlein of Aurora, received these letters of appreciation or small gifts—in Rep. Schoeberlein’s case, flowers—as a comforting show of gratitude for a “no” vote.³⁸ These “thank you” notes functioned as a STOP ERA rhetorical strategy by appealing to the emotion and humanity of politicians, but also appealing to the traditional gender roles that were ingrained in these male politicians. Kind letters from Schlafly and her anti-ERA supporters reflected the gender role of women as emotional supports for men. The women of the anti-ERA movement not only supported traditional gender roles, but also modeled them as a means of keeping Illinois politicians on their side.

Blocking the ERA in Illinois required more than just the support of the staunch anti-ERA assembly member. Achieving this goal would also require votes slipping away from the pro-ERA camp. Either a nay vote or an abstention from voting was a victory for STOP ERA in Illinois, and they sought to attract votes as well as capitalize on mistakes made by both pro-ERA forces outside and inside the assembly chambers, from both the pro-ERA organizations and pro-ERA politicians. The Illinois General Assembly had its own internal conflicts, from which anti-ERA forces benefitted the most. The Illinois’ Democratic Party, which had developed into the Chicago Democrat machine under the lead of Richard J. Daley and Michael Madigan, championed the ERA as it entered the Illinois General Assembly yet provided much of the internal strife that gave way to STOP ERA’s successful campaign to halt ratification in Illinois.³⁹

One such example of conflict within the Democratic Party were issues with the Illinois Black Caucus. As a measure of inclusion, a Democratic member of the Black Caucus, Rep. James Taylor of Chicago, acted as a co-sponsor to the ERA as it came to the floor of the Illinois House of Representatives. This was key to the June 1978 vote in the House, as Rep. Corneal Davis of Chicago, the long-time Democrat head of the Black Caucus, announced his retirement. Without consultation of other Caucus members, Madigan tapped Rep. Taylor and other Democrat House leaders to take Davis’ place. This political conflict led to the abstentions of five members of the Black Caucus, Democrat Reps.

³⁷ Representative John Edward Porter to Phyllis Schlafly, April 18, 1973, in Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism*, 238.

³⁸ Letter from Representative Allan Schoeberlein to Phyllis Schlafly, June 26, 1980, Illinois ERA Action Folder, ERA Files, Eagle Action Forum.

³⁹ At the time of ERA ratification in Illinois, Daley served as both the Cook County Democratic Central Committee Chairman and Mayor of Chicago. Daley remained in his position until his death in 1976. Michael Madigan acted as House Majority Leader through the struggle for ratification of the ERA in Illinois.

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Eugene Barnes, Lewis Caldwell, Raymond Ewell, Emil Jones and Republican Rep. Charles Gaines, each from Chicago and ardent past supporters of the ERA. In June 1978, the ERA failed passage in the House by six votes.⁴⁰ In other cases, the Chicago Democrat machine also turned on some of its own members in the House, such as Rep. Eugenia Chapman, another Democratic sponsor of the ERA. Rep. In 1972, Chapman had supported Adlai Stevenson in his campaign against Mayor Daley to lead the Democratic Convention. As the ERA was brought to a vote for the second time in the House, Mayor Daley himself ordered seven Democratic legislators to pull their votes for the amendment.⁴¹

Conflict in the Illinois Senate also led to the defeat of the ERA. In one case, again, the Black Caucus played a role. Sen. Cecil Partee, a black Chicago Democrat and sponsor of the ERA on the Senate floor, found himself the target of harsh criticism from pro-ERA activists after continued failed passage in the Senate, stating that Partee was “personally responsible.” Upon the next critical vote on the ERA in the Illinois Senate, seven members of the black senators abstained in the voting.⁴² The pro-ERA activists’ distrust of Illinois General Assembly leaders and the issues presented by the structure of the Chicago Democratic machine left the door open for Schlafly and STOP ERA forces to influence these Democrat politicians into continued rejection of the ERA.

From a rhetorical standpoint, the friendly, comforting nature of STOP ERA’s persuasion efforts won them the support of the wavering Democrats. The “thank you” cards and small gifts that appealed to the humanity of politicians was also extended to these Democrats, and it found much more success than the critiques and intense pressure of the pro-ERA activists. As Schlafly would suggest, this again the age-old adage that you can attract more flies with honey than with vinegar. One General Assembly insider commented that many legislators voted in favor of ERA simply to “get the feminists of their backs.”⁴³ The rhetorical strategies of Schlafly and STOP ERA also showed passion for the anti-ERA cause and, in Democrat-held districts, this loud anti-ERA constituency could flip Democrat votes as well in Illinois politicians’ efforts to avoid “commit[ting] political suicide.”⁴⁴ The rhetorical strategies of STOP ERA

⁴⁰ Vernon Jarrett, “Why the Blacks Blocked ERA,” *Chicago Tribune* (Chicago, IL), June 21, 1978, Illinois ERA Action Folder, ERA Files, Eagle Forum Archives.

⁴¹ No Author, “Tell Daley to Pledge to Pass ERA,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, June 14, 1975 in Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism*, 237.

⁴² No Author, “Senate Committee Heat Singes ERA,” *Alton Evening Telegraph*, June 14, 1975 in Donald T. Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism: A Woman’s Crusade* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 238.

⁴³ Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA*, 162.

⁴⁴ No Author, “Representative Rolland Tipsword Resists Pro-ERA Pressure,” *Springfield Herald*, June 12, 1974, Illinois ERA Action Folder, ERA Files, Eagle Forum Archives.

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worked to assure that ratification would fail in Illinois, securing both the anti-ERA vote and persuading wavering pro-ERA votes to either hold or vote “no” on the amendment.

STOP ERA in Illinois faced many struggles typical for grassroots activist groups. As an organization, however, they were ultimately able to overcome the challenges in order to accomplish their goal of dashing the hopes of ratifying the Equal Rights Amendment in the Illinois General Assembly. Illinois would never ratify the Equal Rights Amendment and, on June 30, 1982, the ERA passed its deadline for ratification and officially died with fifteen states who refused to ratify and five states, who had in the past voted in favor of the ERA, who rescinded their votes and opted against the ERA. The success of this organization falls on its leadership, especially Phyllis Schlafly, and the rhetorical strategies it adapted and used to unify as an organization and complete its mission. As a grassroots organization, STOP ERA had two responsibilities: survive as a group and kill the ERA. In Illinois, they met their needs for survival and flourished by shifting their rhetoric to appeal to and integrate a diverse group of anti-ERA activists, such as conservatives, housewives and fundamentalist and orthodox religious communities, which each brought their own unique resources to the movement and opened opportunities to new strategies used by STOP ERA. These new rhetorical strategies, in turn, were used to acquire and retain “no” votes and even persuade some to change their vote or abstain from the decision. STOP ERA’s work in Illinois served as a model for conservatives to stop ratification of the ERA nation-wide and, to this day, serves as a model of successful conservative grassroots activism in action.

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The Diet of Nonviolence: Fasting and the Meaning of Masculinity in Gandhian Philosophy

By Chris Ruud

To understand how Mahatma Gandhi's use of fasting explains where the Indian nation stood in the twentieth century, one must look at the different global reactions. Protesting for a racial and religious balance is one thing, but protesting without the use of violence is much different. This paper will examine historians' arguments about Gandhi's seventeen political fasts. The explicit ideology of this paper focuses on Gandhi's use of fasting to prove violence was not the answer. The implicit ideology is that Gandhi challenged the correlation between food and masculinity. Many historians, including Joseph S. Alter, Dennis Dalton, David Hardiman, Homer A. Jack, and Parama Roy, have debated whether his fasts were necessary to his success of reaching Indian independence; others have argued over whether he was simply trying to manipulate the British government. I argue that Gandhi's iconic Indian movement was mobilized by his fasts. Gandhi stated that his fasts were primarily started as means for good health. Today, however, we view Gandhi's fasts as revolutionary. Gandhi replaced violent protests with peaceful fasts, thus creating the necessary means for the success of Indian independence. Moreover, with his diet, he altered masculinity's meaning of physical strength. He was involved in cultural battles without the use of weapons.

Historians Tim Pratt and James Vernon argue that "the period from 1916 through to the 1940s can perhaps be represented as the golden age of the hunger strike in anticolonial struggles."¹ Gandhi was certainly among the major icons to lead nonviolent protests through his hunger strikes. Understanding the in-depth themes of his fasts clarifies how Gandhi used his fasts as a form of nonviolent protest. These themes can be divided into three categories: physical, religious, and political. What differentiates these three themes from each other was simply the context of each one. First, the physical category included the diet of Gandhi's fasts. Gandhi found he could utilize his experience with fasting

¹ Tim Pratt and James Vernon, "'Appeal from This Fiery Bed...': The Colonial Politics of Gandhi's Fasts and Their Metropolitan Reception," *Journal of British Studies* 44:1 (January 2005), 94.

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by applying those lessons to redefine the meaning of “masculinity.” Fasting is not merely completely abstaining from eating food; it also can be less restrictive such as limiting the number of meals or allowing minimal foods. Second, the religious theme included Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, and Judaism and their teachings of the importance of fasting. Hinduism is not the only religion that includes fasts. For example, Christianity strongly advocates fasts. Christianity may not push for fasts to be done on a routine basis, but, like Hinduism, prayer is highly recommended to help refresh the mind and soul. The importance of prayer is beneficial to fasts to keep the mind focused.

Third, many different religious traditions have used fasting with a focused mind for political purposes. What makes Gandhi’s fasts politically unique was he knew many elites in the political realm were against the idea of fasting as protest. Gandhi stated that, “There is a natural prejudice against it [fasting] as part of a political struggle. It has recognized place in religious practice. But it is considered a vulgar interpolation in politics by the ordinary politician, though it has always been resorted to by prisoners in a haphazard way with more or less success. By fasting, however, they have always succeeded in drawing public attention and disturbing the peace of jail authorities.”² Gandhi argued that he fasted not to upset anyone, but simply to protest without the use of violence. Fasting to him was the ideal way to protest without harm and to perhaps spread his idea of nonviolence throughout India and the world.

To understand why fasting was necessary for Gandhi to protest without violence, several questions must be answered. How did fasts begin as a physical activity, transform into a religious context, and end up being used politically? Why did Gandhi want to change the views of masculinity? Why did Gandhi see fasting as such an essential political tool? What evidence is there to prove that fasting was such a successful tool for Indian independence against the British Empire? Exploring letters written by Gandhi on how to fast, why to fast, and the importance of prayer will help to answer these questions.

Gandhi’s autobiography gave specific accounts on how he believed his fasts positively impacted Indian independence. Newspaper articles from when Gandhi was alive supported the argument that his fasts were necessary. Along with historical newspapers, modern newspaper articles, such as University of Missouri’s *The Maneater*, will review how Gandhi’s teachings are still being practiced in society today. All of these primary documents illustrate that Gandhi’s fasts were non-manipulative and necessary for Indian independence.

² Mahatma Gandhi, *Fasting in Satyagraha: Its Use and Abuse* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Pub. House, 1965), 30.

Historiography

When looking at Gandhi's fasts as interpreted by historians, it is significant to realize the historical context in which these historians made their arguments. Joseph Alter, in *Gandhi's Body: Sex, Diet, and the Politics of Nationalism*, examines the physical aspect of Gandhi's fasts. As far as Gandhi using his fasts as manipulation, Alter believed Gandhi was misunderstood. "His high ideals, and the academic as well as popular attention given to those ideals, have drawn attention away from a more fundamentally important level of action, experience, and social, political, and moral experimentation ... his body. This book is designed to relocate him in the world, and by extension to argue against the derivation discourse of nationalism and other forms of bounded culture."³ Alter argued Gandhi was not manipulating anyone; rather, he was enlightening everyone on how a protest could be done peacefully. Gandhi's chose to protest nonviolently by fasting.

Dennis Dalton, in *Mahatma Gandhi: Nonviolent Power in Action*, interpreted Gandhi's fasts as a manifestation of peace, especially his fast in Calcutta. Dalton argued his successful fast in Calcutta was the most important fast in Gandhi's life. This fast was "the ultimate weapon of satyagraha [a policy of passive political resistance], employed only when all other means had failed. As it was then used by Gandhi in Calcutta, the fast marked the final and climactic stage of his satyagraha, an intense method of conflict-resolution through nonviolent action. In this sense, the fast may be seen as an 'escalation' of nonviolent conflict, the culmination of a process in which power is increasingly applied to achieve swaraj."⁴ For Gandhi's philosophy, swaraj (self-rule) emphasized self-governance. His belief was violence could not reach swaraj or Indian independence.

David Hardiman also argued that Gandhi fasted for many different reasons, but the one that stood out the most for him was Gandhi's desire to expand the practice of fasting. Gandhi's fasts inspired others to also protest nonviolently through fasting. In his book, *Gandhi in His Time and Ours: The Global Legacy of His Ideas*, Hardiman stated, "Gandhi ... resisted such politics with his whole being. He refused to accept the validity of such divides, arguing that humans everywhere share much in common, and that there are always grounds for a fruitful dialog that can lead to a resolution of conflicts and a

³ Joseph S. Alter, *Gandhi's Body: Sex, Diet, and the Politics of Nationalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), x-xi.

⁴ Dennis Dalton, *Mahatma Gandhi: Nonviolent Power in Action* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 153.

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breaking down of difference.”⁵ In Gandhi’s case, he was one of the first to spread the idea of nonviolence as a successful method for change.

Homer A. Jack, in *The Gandhi Reader: A Sourcebook of His Life and Writings*, examined satyagraha used by Gandhi and how his fasts were an epochal social invention. Gandhi believed that the cause of the strike must be just. Along with that, there should be practical unanimity among the strikers. There should be no violence used against non-strikers and they should be able to maintain their composure during the entire strike period. Jack explained how “resignation is the remedy” when there is enough labor to replace strikers. Mimicking bad examples makes mistakes.⁶ Gandhi led as a positive example, thus motivating his followers to strike with good intentions.

Gandhi’s political intentions with his fasts were significant, but he could not have done them without a proper diet. Parama Roy’s, *Alimentary Tracts: Appetites, Aversions, and the Postcolonial*, examined the impact different types of food had on Gandhi’s fasts. “Gandhi’s experiments in dietetics, including fasting, are never entirely reducible to pure functionalism or to simple morality of distribution: they gesture toward other bodily and moral economies simultaneously. Not coincidentally, his turn to fasting as a moral instrument was articulated with his endeavor.”⁷ This is significant because his motivation was led by his diet.

Roy’s argument related to Alter’s, in that both historians discussed the physical aspect of Gandhi’s fasts. What they both failed to consider was the amount of prayer Gandhi included in his fasts. Both could have examined how prayer affected Gandhi’s diet for a fast. Although Dalton, Hardiman, and Jack did not focus on Gandhi’s diet during his fasts, their arguments concluded that the reasoning behind his fasts were just as important as the exercise of the fast itself. Overall, during his experiments Gandhi was completely aware of his reasoning behind his diet. Moreover, his emphasis on prayer was just as important as the act of fasting, which allowed him to protest without violence.

Diet and Masculinity

Gandhi believed that food and fasts were intimately related. Most important, he understood that fasts affected the self before they affected society.

⁵ David Hardiman, *Gandhi in His Time and Ours: The Global Legacy of His Ideas* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), xii.

⁶ Homer A. Jack, *The Gandhi Reader: A Sourcebook of His Life and Writings* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld Press, 1956), 161.

⁷ Parama Roy, *Alimentary Tracts: Appetites, Aversions, and the Postcolonial* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 96-97.

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In order to fast, Gandhi needed to battle against his appetite. Gandhi noted that “Fasting and restriction in diet now played a more important part in my life. Passion in man is generally co-existent with a hankering after the pleasures of the palate. I have encountered many difficulties in trying to control passion as well as taste.”⁸ At first, Gandhi struggled with fasting because he tried to find nourishment with pleasurable tastes. “I began with a fruit diet, but from the standpoint of restraint I did not find much to choose between a fruit diet and a diet of food grains. I observed that the same indulgence of taste was possible with the former as with the latter, and even more, when one got accustomed to it. I therefore came to attach greater importance to fasting or having only one meal a day on holidays.”⁹

Gandhi’s diet during his fasts consisted of nuts, citruses, and water. For decades, historians have debated whether Gandhi used this diet for manipulation or not. Parama Roy argued that Gandhi’s appetites and diets had nothing to do with manipulation.¹⁰ Gandhi himself commented that his diet served only a physical purpose: “One should eat not in order to please the palate, but just to keep the body going.”¹¹

Gandhi viewed fasting in several different ways. Before fasting was a political tool, it was still simply a dietary decision.

But I also saw that, the body now being drained more effectively, the food yielded greater relish and the appetite grew keener. It dawned upon me that fasting could be made as powerful a weapon of indulgence as of restraint. Many similar later experiences of mine as well as others can be adduced as evidence of this startling fact. I wanted to improve and train my body, but as my chief object now was to achieve restraint and a conquest of the palate, I selected first one food and then another, and at the same time restricted the amount. But relish was after me, as it were. As I gave up one thing and took up another, this latter afforded me a fresher and greater relish than its predecessor.¹²

⁸ Ibid., 391.

⁹ Ibid., 392.

¹⁰ Ibid., 10.

¹¹ Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, *Gandhi an Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with Truth*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993), 321.

¹² Ibid., 392.

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Once Gandhi discovered the intense importance of fasting, he could master it to better his body. After he perfected fasting for health reasons, he later illuminated himself by thinking of how he could fast for truth and for political change.

Gandhi knew he could not begin intense fasting right away. He understood that he needed to have the right mindset and training for a stable mind. Gandhi explained how a person must have purpose and self-control to successfully fast. Fasting could be done not for just the self, but also for the benefit of others.

Fasting should be inspired by perfect truth and perfect non-violence. The call for it should come from within and it should not be imitative. It should never be undertaken for a selfish purpose, but for the benefit of others only. A fast is out of the question in a case where there is hatred for anybody. But what is the inner voice? Is every one capable of hearing it? These are big questions. The inner voice is there in every one of us, but one whose ears are not open for it cannot hear it, just as a deaf person is unable to hear the sweetest of songs. Self-restraint is essential in order to make our ears fit to hear the voice of God.¹³

What makes this letter by Gandhi significant is it explained how fasting does not promote violence if those who choose to fast are in the right positive mindset. If the inspiration is from perfect truth and perfect nonviolence, then the intentions of the fasts are for the same reasons—for perfect truth and perfect nonviolence. In order to peacefully protest, a person cannot fast with the intentions to harm others. If so, perfect truth and perfect nonviolence were not in the mindset because the intentions of the fasts were against another person. According to Gandhi, fasting should not be done against someone because it would be considered violent intentions.

Alter's book, *Gandhi's Body*, explained the importance of diet for the self. When discussing public health, "controlling one's palate is intimately associated with controlling desire and – standard vegetarianism aside – a moderate, unspiced, minimally cooked, and quickly prepared meal of simple, unprocessed, natural food is the dietary basis for *brahmacharya* [virtue of

¹³ *Gandhi's Selected Letters-II*, 30 October 1932, 46-47.

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celibacy when unmarried and fidelity when married],”¹⁴ Gandhi also personally explained the dietary essentials of a fast in a letter to Yeravda Mandir. He explained how important water was during a fast and how someone may add a drop of lemon juice and honey if needed. This was significant because it described how the diet of Gandhi’s fasts did not have the traditional colonial masculine food items. Gandhi did not consider his diet neither masculine nor feminine because he rejected the idea of the body in masculinity. Indeed, he did not consider himself either male or female. He stated that the “soul is neither male nor female, neither young nor old. These attributes belong to the body alone, as both scripture and experience testify. The soul is the same in both you and me.”¹⁵

Diets not only affected the body, but also the mind. Gandhi was so passionate about vegetarianism that he started a local vegetarian club while studying to become a barrister in England. Gandhi served as the secretary; Sir Edwin Arnold served as vice president; and Dr. Oldfield, the editor of *The Vegetarian*, served as president. Roy’s book, *Alimentary Tracts*, explained how carnivory and vegetarianism affected the mind differently, especially with regard to abstinence. She emphasized that “vegetarianism is not in itself an instance of alimentary abstinence unless one takes carnivory as the condition of alimentary normality.”¹⁶ Of course, millions of Indians were vegetarians; to many it was a simple everyday choice. They did not choose to become a vegetarian out of health or sacrifice of pleasure; it was the normal way of life. Someone who consumed meat, like carnivores, had a more aggressive behavior, almost like a tiger. Whereas herbivores, like Gandhi, were seen as more calm and collected, much like an elephant.

Gandhi took vegetarianism into a new perspective. He understood diet could be transformed into a foundation of ethical abstinence. When Gandhi was a young boy, he took his experience with meat consumption as a cultural duty and could develop into a peaceful human being based on his behavioral change with a new vegetarian diet. But why did Gandhi stress diet so much? To successfully gain *swaraj*, the person must practice self-rule to the smallest extent. “All of this stresses how profoundly somatic Gandhi’s ‘experiments in truth’ were and how pronounced was his belief that self-rule at a national level was meaningless without self-rule at the most banal and intimate bodily level.”¹⁷

¹⁴ Alter, *Gandhi’s Body*, 20.

¹⁵ Mahatma Gandhi, “Neither Male Nor Female.” Letter to Ashram Sisters, Vaishakha shudi 1

¹⁶ Roy, *Alimentary Tracts*, 26.

¹⁷ Ibid., 26.

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Before Gandhi focused on his vegetarianism, he was mesmerized with how meat and masculinity correlated. He especially observed this in his youth with English schoolboys. Many people of India felt inferior to the Englishman specifically because of how big they were. “Gandhi recalls a doggerel in fashion among schoolboys in his youth that extolled the preternatural prowess of the Englishman, a prowess conferred by the eating of meat: ‘Behold the mighty Englishmen / He rules the Indian small, / Because a meat-eater / He is five cubits tall.’¹⁸”¹⁹ Roy argued young boys were taught by society that meat was the key to being masculine. A man could not be masculine if he did not eat meat.

Roy argued how this message did not just influence young English boys, but also Indian males as well. Many Indians believed that “‘We are a weak people because we do not eat meat. The English are able to rule over us, because they are meat-eaters.’”²⁰ This belief in the link between meat and masculinity was pervasive, despite the fact that meat eating was not then and is not now prohibited to large numbers of caste Hindus.²¹ Roy’s statement is significant to Gandhi’s alimentary abstinence because he learned how easy it was for Indian civilians to be persuaded to feel inferior to the Englishmen.

Roy also discusses how in Gandhi’s early life, he was in favor of the consumption of meat. Gandhi wanted muscular Hinduism so it could confront muscular Christianity and muscular Englishness. Along with wanting to feel less inferior to nations as a whole, Gandhi wanted to feel less inferior to his wife, Kasturba. “[M]eat eating would free Gandhi not just from British rule but from his galling sense of physical inferiority to his wife, Kasturba, as the writer, by no means deficient in a sense of the ridiculous, recalls: ‘I knew she had more courage than I, and I felt ashamed of myself. She knew no fear of serpents and ghosts. She could go out anywhere in the dark. My friend . . . would tell me that he could hold in his hand live serpents, could defy thieves and did not believe in ghosts. And all this was, of course, the result of eating meat.’”²² Meat consumption related to power and Gandhi understood that. However, Gandhi also understood the power of truth and good health, which in his mind, was superior to power.

¹⁸ Lloyd I. Rudolph and [Susanne Hoeber Rudolph](#), *The Modernity of Tradition: Political Development in India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 175.

¹⁹ Roy, *Alimentary Tracts*, 80.

²⁰ Rudolph and Rudolph, *The Modernity of Tradition*, 175.

²¹ Roy, *Alimentary Tracts*, 80.

²² Rudolph and Rudolph, *The Modernity of Tradition*, 175; and Roy, *Alimentary Tracts*, 81.

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Gandhi believed food was the source of health, not strength.²³ He challenged the supremacy of man over lower animals. In his autobiography, Gandhi mused that “Ethically they had arrived at the conclusion that man’s supremacy over the lower animals meant not that the former should prey upon the latter, but that the higher should protect the lower, and that there should be mutual aid between the two as between man and man. They had brought out the truth that man eats not for enjoyment but to live.”²⁴ This meant having a diet to keep the body healthy while sparing the lives of other animals. Gandhi succeeded in this diet by being a vegetarian.

While Gandhi spent time in England, he came across three definitions of meat worth noting. These definitions were key to his decision to become a vegetarian. The first definition of meat was the flesh of birds and beasts. The second definition was the flesh of all living organisms. The third and final definition of meat was the flesh of all living organisms and their products, such as eggs and milk.²⁵ At first, Gandhi has a difficult time adopting vegetarianism. Eggs complicated Gandhi’s choice of foods because they were dairy. This was difficult for Gandhi at first because he could not consume foods that he desired. In spite of the hardship, he believed sacrificing meat and animal products in his diet would lead to happiness in the long run. Moreover, by mastering dietary purity, he saved the lives of animals.

Avoiding milk also played a key role in Gandhi’s theory of dietary purity. Gandhi believed that only infants should drink the milk of their mothers. He believed milk was in the same category as meat, in that it contaminated the purity of the soul when consumed. “It is my firm conviction that man need take no milk at all, beyond the mother’s milk that he takes as a baby.” Instead of milk, a person’s diet “should consist of nothing but sunbaked fruits and nuts. He can secure enough nourishment both for the tissues and the nerves from fruits like grapes and nuts like almonds. Restraint of the sexual and other passions becomes easy for a man who lives on such food.”²⁶ Impure foods such as milk and meat led to temptation. Gandhi proved himself a firm believer that a person is what they eat.

Gandhi rejected the idea that food was directly related to masculinity. His denial of food for strength challenged social norms. He sparked the argument of what a masculine body should look like. He allowed people to experience masculinity by not having any shame in what they eat. The bodies

²³ Mahatma Gandhi, “Perfect Food.” Letter, March 21, 1933.

²⁴ Gandhi, *Gandhi an Autobiography*, 55.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 57.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 333.

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of vegetarians were hidden from society. The Victorian ideals of physical satisfaction and accomplishment of the body corrupted many people's self-image.

One man who symbolized Indian masculinity prior to Gandhi's rejection of meat and adoption of vegetarianism was a wrestler named Ghulam Muhammad, also known as "The Great Gama." "From his absolute self-control, his diet of milk, clarified butter, meat extracts, and almonds, and his strict regimen of uniquely Indian exercises, he proved masculinity as such did not need to be defined in terms of the manly Victorian ideals of pride and prowess. To the extent that this is true, his dramatic victory – appropriated by the middle class, to be sure – was a powerful response to the self-image of effiteness."²⁷ "The Great Gama" proved that Indian men could have large muscular bodies. However, Gandhi believed gender did not matter.

Gandhi feminized nationalism by playing by his own rules of gender. By this, he rejected the idea of masculinity being symbolized by bodies of the Greek Gods or even Michelangelo's David. Gandhi disagreed by believing strength did not come from food or muscles. If Michelangelo were to have sculpted David with the body of Gandhi, Victorians would not have taken the statue seriously.

Evidence that supported Gandhi's argument of meat not being pure for the body came in the 1950s. At this time, Muhammad developed high blood pressure, exhaustion, pain in his sides, asthma, and experienced numerous cardiac arrests. As a result, "The Great Gama" was forced to sell his medals and trophies in order to pay for his own medical bills.²⁸ Because of this, "The Great Gama" became just "Gama" to Gandhi. However, Gandhi disagreed with the idea of exercising only to build physical strength. "It is significant, in this regard, that the critical point of exercising was not to build strength per se but to stimulate normal breathing and establish control over the senses."²⁹ Gandhi's argument against a Victorian masculine diet was that even though the body may look indestructible, it would eventually break down.

Being a vegetarian made fasting much easier on the body. What modeled "The Great Gama" to Gandhi was the relationship between diet and religion. As entertaining it would have been to see Gandhi as a wrestler, he was not. However, Gandhi was a Hindu, and even some Hindu wrestlers were vegetarians. The majority of Muslim wrestlers were meat eaters.

²⁷ Alter, *Gandhi's Body*, 131.

²⁸ Ibid., 143.

²⁹ Ibid., 15.

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“But in the imperatively nervous, modern, middle-class conception of things Hindu wrestlers *should* be vegetarians, whereas Muslims like Gama naturally eat meat.”³⁰

Fasting in Religion

Hindus believed that fasting allowed the body to suffer, which permitted a person’s sins to decrease. The ideal way to fast in the Hindu religion was fast for one day of the week. A person should have an empty stomach up until the afternoon, only being allowed to drink water. The afternoon is the only time someone fasting can eat, but then only fruits or juice. The ideal amount of time a person should fast was from sunrise to sunset. According to Gandhi, “fasts can help to curb animal passion, only if it is undertaken with a view of self-restraint.”³¹

Other religions also included fasts. In Christianity, the Bible stated that fasting was expected, but was not mandatory. Jesus Christ fasted for forty days; therefore, Christians fast for forty days to mark Lenten season, which ends on Easter Sunday. Easter Day plays the biggest role in determining when the fasts begin. “Easter Day is always the first Sunday after the full moon that falls on or after March 21. It cannot occur before March 22 or after April 25. The sequence of all Sundays of the Church Year depends upon the date of Easter Day. The date of Easter also determines the beginning of Lent on Ash Wednesday, and the feast of the Ascension on Thursday forty days after Easter Day.”³²

The Catholic Church considered fasting to be so holy an activity that it disagreed with using fasting as a form of protest. This issue was important in Ireland in the 1980s. At this time, many Catholic Irish activists in Northern Ireland used hunger strikes as a form of protest against the British government when it withdrew Special Category Status for convicted paramilitary prisoners. Four prisoners died from the hunger strikes, which raised the question of whether hunger strikes were a form of suicide. “According to the Catholic church teaching, a person who takes his own life has acted immorally. Suicide is seen as an intrinsic evil because it destroys a life that was created by God. At the same time, there are many factors that may cause uncertainty about the nature and morality of a given case.”³³

³⁰ Alter, *Gandhi’s Body*, 135.

³¹ Gandhi, *Gandhi an Autobiography*, 331-332.

³² *Lesser Feasts and Fasts* (New York: Church Publishing Inc., 2006), 3.

³³ Kenneth A. Briggs, “Catholic Church Endeavors to Put Hunger Strikers in Perspective,” 8 June 1981, *The New York Times*.

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Christians and Hindus were not the only religions to fast. People of the Jewish faith fasted during Yom Kippur. This twenty-five hour fast begins on the eve of Yom Kippur and ends after nightfall. However, fasting in Judaism on Yom Kippur does not necessarily just abstaining from food. “The Bible commands Jews to ‘afflict your soul’ on Yom Kippur as a sign of atonement, and while it does not specifically mention fasting, the commandment has come down to mean acts of repentance like fasting, the wearing of leatherless shoes and abstinence from sexual relations.”³⁴

Islam is another religion known for its fasts. Dr. Arafat El-Ashi, Director of the Muslim World League Canada Office, defined fasting within the Islamic religion as complete restraint from all temptations. “Literally defined, fasting means to abstain ‘completely’ from foods, drinks, intimate intercourse and smoking, before the break of the dawn till sunset, during the entire month of Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic year. But if we restrict the meaning of the Islamic Fasting to this literal sense, we would be sadly mistaken.”³⁵

Despite their differences, all of the religions shared a similar reason behind the fasting. The days may be different, the time span may not be the same, and the variety of foods that can and cannot be consumed differed among the religions, but the sole purpose behind fasting is the practice of self-restraint. Whether it is abstaining from food, drinks, sex, or anything regarding personal luxury, each participant in the fast practiced the art of self-control.

Fasting in Politics

Fasting was only recognized within a religious context until Gandhi began to use his fasts as a form of non-violent protest. When he started using fasts as a political tool, they quickly received a lot of attention from all over the world. His first penitential fast, which lasted for seven days, was in Phoenix, South Africa.³⁶ Another fast of Gandhi’s was in a jail cell at the palace of Aga Khan at Poona in 1943 as a protest to push for racial equality among Indians and the British. This was the first anti-untouchability fast against separate electorates and reservation of seats for depressed classes.³⁷

Gandhi was a firm believer of *ahimsā*, which was an Indian term meaning “not to injure.” This belief was instrumental in Gandhi’s decisions to fast. Fasting, in Gandhi’s eyes, was an excellent political tool to protest without

³⁴ Joseph Berger, “A Successful Yom Kippur Fast, With a Medical Assist,” 21 September 2012, *The New York Times*.

³⁵ Arafat El-Ashi, “Fasting in Islam,” *Islamic Society of Rutgers University*.

³⁶ “The Previous Fasts,” XI: 86 (4 March 1943), *The Indian Express*. March 4, 1943.

³⁷ “Gandhi Ends Fast Lasting 21 Days,” 3 March 1943 *The Free Lance Star*.

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anyone being harmed. He believed that non-violence was more powerful than violent actions. This was noticed around the world in each fast Gandhi conducted. Gandhi's argument against violence was that it could only be escalated. According to Hardiman's book, *Gandhi in His Time and Ours*, Gandhi believed that freedom through violence was impossible. "He most emphatically rejected a nationalism that sought freedom through violence. He argued that terrorist methods were a foreign import of alien to the nature of Indian religion, which was suffused with the principle of *ahimsa*."³⁸

Another one of Gandhi's most memorable fasts was his Calcutta Fast. In August 1947, India was a new independent country from the imperial British Empire. Next on India's agenda was settling its inner peace. The Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs were among the three religions that were involved in an outbreak of civil war. This civil war, also known as the "Great Calcutta Killing," lasted for four long days. During the war, the three religious groups attacked and killed one another. The death toll was estimated to be anywhere around four thousand people with at least eleven thousand people wounded.³⁹ Dalton explained how this catastrophic event in Indian history was the worst period in Gandhi's life. Dalton, in *Mahatma Gandhi: Nonviolent Power in Action*, believed that the civil war "demonstrated the grim truth that Indian culture had at least as much capability for civil violence as any other, that this could occur despite all the emphasis given to nonviolence since 1919, and that although India had gained independence, it certainly had not achieved *swaraj*."⁴⁰ This was Gandhi's first time testing his tactic of nonviolence in the middle of communal riots. Most Indian people reacted to his fast positively, giving him their utmost trust and support. "Moreover, as both Hindus and Muslims turned increasingly to him with trust, Gandhi's own confidence in his mission increased. Only days before the Calcutta killing, he had said, "I have never had the chance to test my nonviolence in the face of communal riots." Now, this had been tested. The results were successful."⁴¹

Gandhi used the concept of *swaraj* (to self-rule) for Indian independence from the British Empire. However, Gandhi understood that a country could not reach *swaraj* if inner peace between the religions were not met. Gandhi's resolution was to begin a fast, which became his famous Calcutta Fast. This fast was unique because he was so against the religious feud, he was

³⁸ David Hardiman, *Gandhi in His Time and Ours: The Global Legacy of His Ideas* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 15.

³⁹ Dalton, *Mahatma Gandhi*, 146.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 139.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 162.

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originally not going to stay in Calcutta to fast. As a Hindu, Gandhi only promised to stay if he had full assurance from Muslim leaders that they would protect the Hindus. His sole purpose to fast in Calcutta was to remind the Indian people that freedom from foreign domination was to overcome its own poverty.⁴²

As Gandhi returned from Calcutta, he could only think about the violence he witnessed. "I yearn for heart friendship between the Hindus, the Sikhs and the Muslims. It subsisted between them the other day. Today it is non-existent. It is a state that no Indian patriot worthy of the name can contemplate with equanimity. Though the Voice within has been beckoning for a long time, I have been shutting my ears to it, lest it may be the voice of Satan otherwise called my weakness. I never like to feel resourceless, a Satyagrahi never should. Fasting is his last resort in the place of the sword—his or other's."⁴³ For the riots in Calcutta, Gandhi knew his only option was to fast. Though the protest was still deadly, his fast was still successful because it ended the violence.

As far as Gandhi's fast in Satyagraha, his goal was not to fast against anyone.⁴⁴ Essentially, Gandhi's perspective on fasting against another person was still seen as violent.

Fasting in Satyagraha has well-defined limits. You cannot fast against a tyrant, for it will be as a piece of violence done to him. You invite penalty from him for disobedience of his orders, but you cannot inflict on yourself penalties when he refuses to punish and renders it impossible for you to disobey his orders so as to compel infliction of penalty. Fasting can only be restored to against a lover, not to extort rights but to reform him, as when a son fasts for a parent who drinks. My fast at Bombay, and then at Bardoli, was of that character. I fasted to reform those who loved me. But I will not fast to reform, say, General Dyer who not only does not love me, but who regards himself as my enemy.⁴⁵

Gandhi understood that if someone fasted against another person, that itself was considered violent. Fasting against another person would be considered a weapon, thus encouraging others to use violence. Gandhi understood that if he

⁴² Horace Alexander, "A Miracle in Calcutta," *Prospect Magazine*, 2007.

⁴³ Mahatma Gandhi, "My Fast as a Protest." Speech, December 1, 1948.

⁴⁴ Gandhi, "Fasting in Satyagraha." Letter, August 12, 1932.

⁴⁵ *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* -Vol. XVIII, December 4, 1924, 420.

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fasted as a weapon, then it would completely defeat the purpose of fasting nonviolently. His goals were to nonviolently protest while encouraging others to not use violence if they chose to protest. Gandhi influenced hundreds of millions of people throughout time. His influence was so dominant that even today people are still practicing fasts as a nonviolent tool for protests.

During the months of October and November 2015, many people ranging from students to faculty and staff protested for equal racial rights on university campuses nationwide. In a nonviolent protest at the University of Missouri, Jonathan Butler, a university athlete, fasted until the president of the university stepped down. University President, Timothy Wolfe, was “accused of insensitivity and lack of action after a series of racist episodes at the university.”⁴⁶ Butler’s fast was successful because not only did the president of the university step down, Butler achieved his goal without the use of violence. His non-violent tactic was heard around the world and allowed for other schools to not break out into violence. Gandhi’s influence was successful because Gandhi would want anyone to do the right thing, not just leaders. “You don’t have to be a student leader on this campus to make a stand on something.”⁴⁷

Conclusion

Gandhi’s use of fasting was necessary to Indian independence. He proved to the world that racial equality could be achieved without the use of violence. Gandhi succeeded by not only allowing for Indian independence, but also halting a civil war. Gandhi made nuts and water a diet of revolution, rather than meats and milk. His fasts were not manipulative and were successful to India’s progression into the modern world. His influence left an imprint on the world to the point where his use of nonviolence is still significant today. Gandhi’s success can be measured by the lack of violence in his protests. The fact that violence was not used, while still allowing independence to be reached by India and a stopping of a civil war, illustrates the success of Gandhi’s use of fasting.

⁴⁶ Madison Rodick, “A Mizzou Freshman Shares What Life Has Been Like on Campus During Student Protest,” *Teen Vogue*, 2015.

⁴⁷ Emily Gallio and Lauren Wortman, “Student leaders respond to Butler’s hunger strike,” *The Maneater*, November 4, 2015.

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Suffrage Battles: Militant Tactics of the National Woman's Party from 1913 to 1920

By Kelly Schrems

On March 3, 1913, Woodrow Wilson arrived on a train in Washington D.C., one day before his inauguration as the next president of the United States. His welcome as he stepped off the train, however, drew far fewer people than expected as hundreds lined Pennsylvania Avenue in anticipation of a great pageant on behalf of woman's suffrage. Inez Milholland headed the event, referred to as the Woman's Suffrage Parade of 1913. Wearing a crown and draped in a fluttering white dress atop a white stallion, Milholland led the parade with strong symbolism and might. (See Appendix; Figure 1) An enthusiastic public face, Milholland continued her charge for suffrage until she collapsed during a speech in California three years later. Sadly, Milholland died soon after. The last words she spoke had been: "Mr. President, how long must women wait for liberty?"¹

With Milholland portrayed as a martyr, the women's suffrage movement picked up steam in 1916. Some women split away from the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) to seek different ways in which to advance the cause of enfranchisement for women. The National Woman's Party (NWP) emerged as a subset of that split. They wanted to establish a 19th amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which would guarantee the right to vote for women. Women like Inez Milholland and Alice Paul started and inspired the NWP with new (sometimes referred to as "militant") tactics from the British Suffragettes.² One NWP group who took advantage of militant tactics referred to themselves as the "Silent Sentinels." Militant tactics of the National Woman's Party included picketing the White House, launching a massive suffrage parade in Washington D.C., lobbying congressional members, and working night and day for the passage of the 19th

¹ Michael Waldman, *The Fight to Vote* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2016), 118-121.

² While attending school in England, Paul was asked to participate in a demonstration aimed toward The Prime Minister, Lord Herbert Asquith. At this demonstration, British Suffragettes made a point of berating the Prime Minister with questions about the possibility of suffrage. The police force quickly arrested them. This was one of Paul's first exposures to the fight for suffrage and how to use militant tactics, which became incredibly influential once Paul returned to the United States. Christine Lunardini, *Alice Paul: Equality for Women* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2013), 16-17.

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Amendment. Their tactics helped the overall cause of the women's suffrage movement and decreased the time it took to ratify the 19th amendment on August 18, 1920.

Several key questions influenced my research on the battles over suffrage, many of which started with my fascination about Wilson's reaction toward the Silent Sentinels. Why was there such a sudden need for new tactics in the 1910s? Why did these activists choose controversial actions such as the White House pickets? How did people of the time perceive these women: noble with a worthy cause or radical with an unattainable agenda? Why did Wilson change his mind about how to respond to the presence of these women picketing in front of the White House? How did Wilson's changed attitude impact the public's perception? What tactics have been left out of research or not looked at closely enough?

Since the 1980s, historians have dealt with some aspects of these questions and provided several key additions to the research of the suffrage movement. They have pointed out that the movement did not start and end with women in the 19th century like Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, who originated the radical notions of women's political equality. Rather, between 1890 and 1910, the movement reached the mainstream through the advancements of the National American Woman Suffrage Association and the American Woman Suffrage Association and then, between 1910 and 1920, re-radicalized through the creation of the NWP and their use of militant tactics. A major advancement in this research became apparent starting in the 1980s. At this time, the rhetoric of suffragists became very important to several historians who focused on the "militancy" of the movement. Historians Christine A. Lunardini and Nancy F. Cott and rhetoricians Katherine H. Adams and Michael L. Keene demonstrated that the missing part to the story of suffrage is analysis of the militant rhetoric and action taken by the NWP.³

Research revolving around Alice Paul and her most militant cohort, the Silent Sentinels, became even more prevalent when a new group of historians looked at the negative connotations of militant rhetoric. Belinda A. Stillion Southard published *Militant Citizenship* in 2011. *Militant Citizenship* attacks President Wilson's reaction toward the National Woman's Party by stating that Wilson's "rhetorical presidency" emerged stronger than that of his 19th century

³ Christine A. Lunardini, *From Equal Suffrage to Equal Rights: Alice Paul and the National Woman's Party, 1910-1928* (New York & London: New York University Press, 1986); Nancy F. Cott, "Feminist Politics in the 1920s: The National Woman's Party," *The Journal of American History* 71, no. 1 (1984): 43-68; Katherine H. Adams and Michael L. Keene, *Alice Paul and the American Suffrage Campaign* (Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008).

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predecessors and yet he did not want to use his “role [as] a speaker and activist for the people” to advance the cause of suffrage.⁴ In 2013, Lunardini added to her earlier work by pinpointing a clear transition of women from NAWSA to the NWP. That transition was prompted by the militant tactics being utilized by the British suffragettes and learned by Alice Paul during her stay in England. Historian Bernadette Cahill, in *Alice Paul, the National Woman's Party and the Vote: The First Civil Rights Struggle of the 20th Century* (2015), concludes that some members of NAWSA viewed the NWP's militancy very negatively.⁵ Finally, in his *Fight to Vote* (2016), Michael Waldman provides specific examples of militant suffrage tactics like the harassment of President Wilson at the White House and the Washington Suffrage Pageant of 1913. He found that the initial experience of the Washington Suffrage Parade enraged and influenced Wilson toward ignoring the picketers outside of the white house; however, eventually, their use of mimicry forced him out of silence.⁶

This research will add analysis of another militant tactic to Waldman's list: individual lobbying by NWP members of Congressional members. Not only did NWP suffragists, like the Silent Sentinels, hope to turn Wilson toward their cause, they also focused on other facets of the national government as well. The three tactics that comprised the NWP's strategy include: shaming President Wilson through mimicry; the Washington Suffrage Parade of 1913; and the highly organized use of Congressional Voting Cards. The combination of these three tactics helped the NWP make strides far beyond that of NAWSA. First, this work will look directly at the affect President Wilson had on the NWP by assessing three different primary sources: *Jailed for Freedom: American Women Win the Vote*, written in 1920 by a Silent Sentinel; *The Story of the Woman's Party* by Inez Haynes Irwin, a member of the NWP; and a speech given by President Wilson at the final steps of women receiving their voting rights, *A Moral Partnership Legitimized*.

⁴ “Rhetorical Presidency” is a term used by historian Belinda Stillion Southard to explain the political communication methods and government styles of U.S. presidents in the 20th century. Southard also provides an umbrella term for the militant tactics that Alice Paul and the Silent Sentinels used: political mimesis. Mimesis, having its origin in Ancient Greece, means to “mimic,” “express,” or “represent oneself as another.” Belinda A. Southard Stillion, *Militant Citizenship: Rhetorical Strategies of the National Woman's Party, 1913-1920* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2011).

⁵ Cahill specifically touches on the backlash of NAWSA and how they used the term “militant,” originally to denounce the NWP, while making themselves seem more reasonable and respectable. Lunardini, *Alice Paul: Equality for Women*; Bernadette Cahill, *Alice Paul, the National Woman's Party and the Vote: The First Civil Rights Struggle of the 20th Century* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2015).

⁶ Waldman, *The Fight to Vote*, 115-123.

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An analysis of the Woman's Suffrage Parade of 1913 will allow for a reminder of the backdrop to the creation of the National Woman's Party. This will take quite a different approach than the scrutiny of President Wilson, which will focus primarily on text analysis. Several photographs will be utilized. To corroborate those images, this research will look at a transcript from a hearing before a subcommittee of the United States Senate concerning police conduct during the parade. Last, but certainly not least, attention will be paid to an aspect of NWP tactics that has not been researched in detail by historians: individual lobbying by NWP members of Congressional members. Congressional Voting Cards, which NWP members used as a database of information regarding the voting preferences of Congressional members, will show the highly organized nature of the National Woman's Party toward their cause.⁷

The rise of the "New Woman" during the Progressive Era and Wilson's foreign policy during World War I affected the fight for suffrage among American women. The Progressive Era, occurring from 1890-1920, is an important link in understanding the direction of the nation and why so many changes for women's suffrage occurred at this time. Progressive leaders opposed "corporate greed," fought poor public sentiment toward immigrants and focused Americans towards the true meanings behind democracy.⁸ The movement, starting out a social movement and eventually becoming a political one, played a role in the way women thought about democracy. They questioned, at a much higher rate, why they were not included in American democracy. This is one of the bases from which a more radical suffrage movement took off.

Alongside the vision of a more progressive nation grew the "New Woman." The idea of the "New Woman" originated as a social phenomenon that defined new social roles for women. In 1904, Winnifred Harper Cooley noted, "the finest achievement of the new woman has been personal liberty."⁹ Cooley refers to a sense of dependence or suppression that women felt toward the men in their lives, but that changed during the progressive era. Historian Ruth Bordin explained that during the late 19th century, the new woman

⁷ James Glen Stovall, *Seeing Suffrage: The Washington Suffrage Parade of 1913, Its Pictures, and Its Effect on the American Political Landscape* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2013); National Woman's Party Congressional Voting Card File, 1915-1954; "Congressional Voting Card #1915.045.003," 1915, "Congressional Voting Card #1919.003.001," August, 1, 1919, Congressional Voting Card #1920.005.001, March 18, 1920. National Woman's Party at the Belmont Paul Women's Equality National Monument, Washington, DC.

⁸ No Author, "The Progressive Era (1890-1920)," George Washington University Columbian College of Arts and Sciences Eleanor Roosevelt Papers Project, accessed November 10, 2016, <https://www2.gwu.edu/~erpapers/teaching/glossary/progressive-era.cfm>

⁹ Winnifred Harper Cooley, *The New Womanhood* (New York: Broadway Publishing Company, 1904). <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/coo1.ark:/13960/t08w3zp79>.

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connected with an image of a working, or “professional,” woman and these women represented a new generation of American women who attempted to become “independent from male control.”¹⁰ The “New Woman” can be viewed as a springboard for feminist action. As women became more confident in the idea that they could act on behalf of themselves, without male interference, they realized the need for activism. Men were not just going to break the chains that held women subordinate; women would need to advocate for that change.

A third point of context to consider is President Woodrow Wilson’s foreign policy aims. According to historian Daniel Larson several historians “have drawn a straight line” connecting President Wilson and the proceeding efforts of the United States to spread democracy abroad. Wilson’s “Fourteen Points” fundamentally attempted to instill a system of democratic interventionism in world affairs.¹¹ Despite Wilson’s apparent dedication to spreading democratic values abroad, he simultaneously denied those same democratic values within his own nation. The Fourteen Points arose during the same peak years that the Silent Sentinels protested in front of the white house, 1917-1919. The women’s suffrage movement, namely the NWP, used Wilson’s own words about the importance of democracy to shed light on his hypocrisy. This context provides an explanation as to why Wilson is an important cog in the wheel to analyze while studying the women’s suffrage movement.

Wilson’s Hypocritical Evolution

Following the death of Inez Milholland, suffragists focused their activism on getting President Wilson to accept that half of the U.S. population was being denied the right to vote. *Jailed for Freedom* is a first-hand depiction of the militant fight for suffrage written by Doris Stevens (a member of the Silent Sentinel cohort). In her account, Stevens points out that Wilson was out as “the only leader powerful enough to direct his party to accept this reform” (“this reform” referred to the enfranchisement of women).¹² It is obvious why, after the death of Inez Milholland, suffragists looked toward Wilson to inspire his party in achieving the suffrage goal. In fact, at a memorial for Milholland, suffragists personally asked for help from President Wilson: “This gathering appeals to you, the President of the United States, We ask you with all the fervor

¹⁰ Ruth Bordin, *Alice Freeman Palmer: the Evolution of a New Woman* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993). <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015029715805>. Date accessed, November 10, 2016.

¹¹ Daniel Larson, “Abandoning Democracy: Woodrow Wilson and Promoting German Democracy, 1918-1919,” *Diplomatic History* 37:3 (June 2013): 476-508.

¹² Doris Stevens, *Jailed for Freedom: American Women Win the Vote*, ed. Carol O’Hare (Troutdale: NewSage Press, 1995).

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and earnestness of our souls to exert your power over Congress in behalf of the national enfranchisement of women... We have come here to you in the name of justice, in the name of democracy, in the name of all women..."¹³ These words, spoken by Sara Bard Field and reiterated by Doris Stevens in writing, evoked an incredibly apathetic response from President Wilson: "It is impossible for me, until the orders of my party are changed, to do anything other than I am doing as a party leader. In this country it is really through the instrumentality of parties that things can be accomplished."¹⁴ These women emphasized that Wilson refused to step outside the political aims of his party to support enfranchisement for women.

After a return to their headquarters, the women heard an emboldened statement by Harriot Stanton Blatch.¹⁵ In this informal address, she called for a movement that would bring "day by day, week in and week out" a message to the President that large numbers of women demanded enfranchisement and wanted to know what he would do about it. Blatch said, "stand there as sentinels—sentinels of liberty, sentinels of self-government, silent sentinels."¹⁶ These three statements, the two made by President Wilson and the response made by Blatch, inspired the creation of the Silent Sentinels. The assumption, made by President Wilson, that these women could do nothing further about their predicament is clear. The refusal of President Wilson to turn his parties' eyes toward suffrage enraged the suffragists in a way that Wilson did not expect. This group would go on to do exactly as Blatch stated: stand "day by day, week in and week out" in front of the White House, using the President's own words against him.

The Story of the Woman's Party by Inez Haynes Irwin depicts examples of using Wilson's own words to force his support for a national amendment. According to Irwin, President Wilson slowly, but surely, turned toward support of women's suffrage. However, he held steadfast to the idea that suffragists should pursue "state-by-state" progress.¹⁷ Irwin corroborates the feelings written by Stevens in *Jailed for Freedom*. Wilson did not deny suffrage,

¹³ Stevens, *Jailed for Freedom*, 55.

¹⁴ Stevens, *Jailed for Freedom*, 56.

¹⁵ Harriot Stanton Blatch was the daughter of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, a famed suffragist who worked with Susan B. Anthony. Blatch went on a lecturing circuit with her mother and aided in writing the second volume of the *History of Woman Suffrage*. She was involved in the pivotal transition of members from NAWSA to the NWP in the early 1910s. No Author, "Women's Rights, Harriot Stanton Blatch," National Park Service, Accessed December 5, 2016, <https://www.nps.gov/woori/learn/historyculture/harriot-stanton-blatch.htm>.

¹⁶ Stevens, *Jailed for Freedom*, 57.

¹⁷ Inez Haynes Irwin, *The Story of the Woman's Party* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1921), 162-163.

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but he did not understand that state-by-state ratification accomplished nothing in the eyes of the NWP. Many of the suffragists dreaded the thought of continuing with the same slow tactics.¹⁸ The Silent Sentinels, in their two years picketing the White House, would use Wilson's words strategically against him in the hope that he would become embarrassed by his own hypocrisy and do away with the idea of state-by-state ratification. Wilson could not deny his own words because it would open up room for criticism about his dedication to democracy in World War I. In this way, the Silent Sentinels forced Wilson through embarrassment to take on their cause.

The actions of NWP leader, Alice Paul, demonstrated a good example of this strategy. On October 6, 1917, the sixty-sixth Congress refused to pass the amendment for women's suffrage, which enraged many suffragists. That day, Paul marched toward the White House carrying a banner: "The time has come when we must conquer or submit. For us there can be but one choice. We have made it."¹⁹ Here, Paul took advantage of one of the quotes Wilson used to encourage the United States during World War I. The Wilson Administration had recently used that same quote to encourage the purchase of Second Liberty Bond Loans, which the government sold in the United States in support of US involvement in World War I.²⁰ This creates an interesting dichotomy. The quote, when used by Wilson, referred to something entirely different from suffrage. Yet, Paul used it to send a message about the dedication of suffragists to their cause. Wilson could not deny the quote as that would mean also denying the original purpose of the quote. According to historian Belinda A. Stillion Southard, Wilson's rhetoric connected to war, democracy and dedication. He used this rhetorical strategy many times, so the Silent Sentinels had many statements to use and mimic for their movement.²¹

This rhetorical strategy saw success in forcing Wilson to evolve from his belief in state-by-state progress to his eventual support for a constitutional amendment. The end of Wilson's evolution is seen in his own speech, "A Moral Partnership Legitimized," that he delivered on September 30, 1918. In this speech Wilson states, "we stand and are judged in the view not only of our own people and our own consciences but also in the view of all nations and peoples."²² Wilson's embarrassment from his own words being mimicked is

¹⁸ Stevens, *Jailed for Freedom*, 57-58.

¹⁹ Irwin, *The Story of the Woman's Party*, 336.

²⁰ Katherine H. Adams and Michael L. Keene, *After the Vote Was Won: The Later Achievements of Fifteen Suffragists* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2010), 25.

²¹ Southard, *Militant Citizenship*, 21.

²² Woodrow Wilson, "A Moral Partnership Legitimized," in Josh Gottheiner, ed. *Ripples of Hope: Great American Civil Rights Speeches* (New York: Basic Books, 2005), n.p.

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clear. He admits that all people from his nation, and from other nations, are watching and scrutinizing the United States; therefore, creating an amendment to the constitution that allows women the right to vote is necessary to uphold the nation's democratic claims.

Wilson's ideas evolved over time because of militant tactics adopted by Alice Paul and the Silent Sentinels. He began by believing in state-by-state ratification and refused his help toward the suffrage movement in favor of his own parties' political aims. By mimicking Wilson and highlighting his hypocrisy to the American public, the Silent Sentinels succeeded in gaining his support for their cause. They used tactics purposefully to pester and embarrass Wilson because he had repeatedly failed to consider their pleas for help. Wilson evolved begrudgingly not sympathetically, but this worked far faster than the attempts at state-by-state ratification. In this case, the militant tactics of the Silent Sentinels and the NWP found success.

A Need for Militancy Arises: The Washington Suffrage Parade of 1913

The Washington Suffrage Parade of 1913, as the first demonstration for suffrage that Wilson experienced after arriving in Washington DC, initiated his evolution toward supporting the movement. This demonstration occurred the day prior to his inauguration as the 28th president of the United States. Historian Michael Waldman argues that the events taking place on Pennsylvania Avenue overshadowed the arrival of Woodrow Wilson to the capital.²³ *Seeing Suffrage*, by James Glen Stovall, analyzes the event through photography.²⁴ Several images, including one of the on-looking crowd almost spilling into the street and another of an ambulance blocked by the crowd, are of upmost importance to this study.

Many photographs were taken of the Women's Suffrage Parade of 1913. As referenced in the introduction, one of the most famous images was that of Inez Milholland, the parade's matriarch, seated atop a white horse. (Figure 1). Although not fully visible in the particular image, other images show that members of law enforcement and the crowd surrounded the marchers. Historian Waldman claims that a crowd of maybe "100,000 men...inebriated after inaugural festivities" easily broke through insufficient police lines in order

<http://eds.a.ebscohost.com.libproxy.lib.ilstu.edu/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=fc62710c-6811-4dea-a4be-896059588847%40sessionmgr4008&vid=1&hid=4213>.

²³ Waldman, *Fight to Vote*, 118.

²⁴ James Glen Stovall, *Seeing Suffrage: The Washington Suffrage Parade of 1913, Its Pictures, and Its Effect on the American Political Landscape* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2013).

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to reach the members of the parade.²⁵ (Figure 2) There are several other figures in this image, which appear to be members of the military. Indeed, historians James Stovall labels them as members of the Fifteenth Cavalry from Fort Myers.²⁶

The third image also shows that the crowd completely took over the street. There was even an ambulance completely surrounded by the crowd and unable to make its way toward those in need.²⁷ (Figure 3) The presence of an ambulance, like the presence of the Fifteenth Cavalry, makes a statement about the meagerness of the police force in protecting parade members. This shows the possibility of a police force apathetic toward protecting the parade procession as well as the members of the audience. These assumptions depict a clear bias held by the police. They, along with many of the inebriated onlookers, did not attend in support of the parade. Therefore, they did not make an earnest attempt to keep onlookers at bay.

The negative depiction of the police force is corroborated through a transcript from a hearing that took place before the Senate in response to police conduct during the parade. This transcript includes correspondence between Alice Paul (going by the title "Chairman of Procession Committee") and Robert Shaw Oliver (Assistant Secretary of War). In late February 1913, Paul contacted Oliver and requested a "sufficient military force" for the parade. Several days later, Oliver responded: "owing...other contingences of the military service, it will not be practical to furnish the forces for which request [was] made."²⁸ In short, the military refused to provide protection for both those in the procession and those attending the parade. A clear result of this refusal, the demonstration (expected to be peaceful and symbolic) turned into a militarized zone with injured onlookers. The military ignored the original request by Alice Paul, assuming that the Washington DC police force would keep the crowd in order. This is clearly not the case. The crowd got out of control, as seen in figures 2 and 3.²⁹

On March 1, 1913, the police force issued a statement to their ranks explaining what "precautions" would be set in place in order to maintain orderly conduct. Comparing this statement to what can be seen in the photographs

²⁵ Waldman, *The Fight to Vote*, 119.

²⁶ Stovall, *Seeing Suffrage*, 107.

²⁷ Stovall, *Seeing Suffrage*, 110.

²⁸ Wesley Livsey Jones, (1863-1932), and Senate Committee on the District of Columbia. 1913. "Suffrage parade in District of Columbia, March 3, 1913." 812p. LexisNexis U.S. Serial Set Digital Collection, EBSCOhost, accessed November 26, 2016.

²⁹ Stovall, *Seeing Suffrage*, 107, 110.

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indicates a lapse of the police force's cautionary procedures. The statement issued to the force stated:

Pennsylvania Avenue...will be roped with wire cable along the curbs, and...Pennsylvania Avenue will be cleared of all pedestrians and vehicles. To further aid in this movement, police automobiles will precede the parade and assist in maintaining the avenue clear of pedestrians and vehicles. These vehicles will be further utilized, if necessary, to prevent intrusion from the sidewalks upon the parade grounds.³⁰

These precautions seem sound, but the photographic evidence shows little effort in carrying them out. First, there does not appear to be any roped off curbs. In figures 2-3, members of the crowd make their way into the street where Milholland and several cavalrymen men are leading the parade. No obstacles appear to have held them back. Second, the mere presence of the cavalrymen shows the inability (or unwillingness) of the police force to follow through on the second command: using police vehicles "to prevent intrusion from the sidewalks." The police force could not maintain their precautionary measures and the military stepped in after the Assistant Secretary of War had already denied Alice Paul's request to have a military force in attendance.

The chaos occurring at the parade inspired NWP members like Milholland and Paul to reassess their strategies and prepare for negative actions. Alice Paul requested the correct precautionary measures from the military, but it rejected this request and failed to provide proper protection for the parade. Had proper protection from a military force, rather than just the local police force, been provided, the Washington Suffrage Parade may have left a greater impact and not been overthrown by inebriated men. When the parade ended, the suffragists realized that the police force and military had not done their duty. The suffragists learned that they could not depend on any other agency to organize their efforts in support of women's suffrage. NWP members saw a need for tighter organization and self-sufficiency; otherwise their efforts would continue to be stifled as they had at the Washington Parade. This is partially responsible for the shift of members between NAWSA and the NWP.

³⁰ Jones, "Suffrage Parade in District of Columbia," X.

Harassment of Politicians

The third militant tactic in achieving the ratification of a national amendment to the constitution for the enfranchisement of women involved lobbying Congressional members. The NWP accomplished this with the use of "Congressional Voting Cards." These cards provided a systematic record of the political tendencies of Congressional members. By using these cards, NWP members hoped to track the politicians who needed to be lobbied and to what extent.³¹ Although this tactic may not seem overwhelmingly militant in nature, it morphed into a highly organized process, including tedious attention, and called on NWP members to come face to face with those who opposed their cause. This work will argue that the use of the cards can be included as a "militant" tactic because of its highly organized process and the teamwork that went into creating such a process.

Location is an interesting aspect of this tactic. Alice Paul chose to focus the NWP's efforts on Washington DC. This seems like an obvious choice, however, historian Bernadette Cahill disagrees by explaining that the Congressional Union (another suffrage group) thought that DC transformed into a "tomb" when Congress ended their session. They laughed over the idea of NWP members lobbying absent Congressmen. However, Alice Paul disagreed and believed the constant rotation of people made Washington DC the perfect place to conduct suffrage work. Brand new people constantly visited Washington DC for both work and leisure. Not only could NWP members reach out to Congressional members and lobby them, but doing so in such a public manner, where new faces appeared all the time, exposed many new people to the idea of suffrage.³²

With sights set on the nation's Capital, including the plan to lobby Congressional members and make the public more aware of the cause for suffrage, Alice Paul and the NWP used their Congressional Voting Cards to become highly organized. They obtained the information recorded on the cards through personal correspondence and published biographies of Congressmen.³³

³¹ The cards continued to be used by the NWP even after the ratification of the 19th amendment. The National Woman's Party website includes another collection of cards spanning from 1921 to 1955. They used these cards in the same manner, to collect information for future NWP members who would lobby the same congressional members, advocating for further progress for women. National Woman's Party Congressional Voting Card File, 1915-1954; National Woman's Party at the Belmont Paul Women's Equality National Monument, Washington, DC. Accessed November 27, 2016, <http://nationalwomansparty.org/collections/congressional-voting-cards/>.

³² Cahill, *Alice Paul, the National Woman's Party and the Vote*, 59-61.

³³ NWP members, "Congressional Voting Cards," *The National Woman's Party*, 1915-1921.

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In this study, three particular voting cards depict the attention to detail paid to tracking political standing. First, a card written in 1915 and focused on Congressman Richard Olney Jr. of Massachusetts will show how specific details on voting behavior could be helpful in determining who would be a proponent of the suffrage movement. The cards available to the public start in 1915, which leads to the assumption that this could be one of the first cards in the NWP's collection. Second, a card written in 1919 and focused on Governor John G. Townsend Jr. of Delaware will show how the cards started to include more and more information as the cause for suffrage ramped up in the late 1910s. Finally, a card written in 1920 (a few months prior to the ratification of the 19th amendment) and focused on Senator L. Heisler Ball of Delaware shows how the NWP used these cards to track the progress that their Congressional allies made in accordance with their own efforts.³⁴

Card #1 (Figure 4) asked questions about Richard Olney, Jr. including: Did he introduce any bill concerning suffrage? How did he vote on suffrage bills in legislation? Will he support the Susan B. Anthony amendment? The response recorded for all of these is either "no" or "opposed." That might lead one to believe that Congressman Olney would not be a prime target for lobbying.³⁵

However, there are several other notes on the card that could influence an attempt to lobby this Congressman. The card states that Congressman Olney is "a strong progressive candidate" and he "polled more than enough votes to defeat the Republican candidate." These two statements are important. The fact that he polled more than his opponent shows that he is a strong candidate with great support. He could help get the word out about the suffrage movement and sway other congressmen toward supporting it. In addition, being a Progressive is important because he would have been previously exposed to the idea of the "new woman" and women's suffrage. Finally, the card states he "has been regarded as an opponent of woman suffrage but it is understood he voted 'yes' at last state election." All of this information gives the impression that this Congressman could be moving toward supporting women's suffrage. An NWP member who is curious about this congressman could have looked up his card and realized that lobbying efforts directed toward him would be a good use of

³⁴ National Woman's Party Congressional Voting Card File, 1915-1954; "Congressional Voting Card #1915.045.003," 1915, "Congressional Voting Card #1919.003.001," August, 1, 1919, Congressional Voting Card #1920.005.001, March 18, 1920. National Woman's Party at the Belmont Paul Women's Equality National Monument, Washington, DC.

³⁵ National Woman's Party Congressional Voting Card File, 1915-1954; "Congressional Voting Card #1915.045.003," 1915, National Woman's Party at the Belmont Paul Women's Equality National Monument, Washington, DC.

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time. The cards gave the NWP a direction to follow and a place to learn more in the early phases of their movement.³⁶

Card #2 shows several advancements over the four years since 1915. The cards now have sections to organize the information, rather than just writing line after line (Figure 5). The top section of the card includes information about the person. This card is about Governor Townsend of Delaware and states that he is favorable toward suffrage. The middle section includes information about who conducted the interview or collected the information about this politician. This card states that the Delegation of the Delaware Branch of the National Woman's Party interviewed Governor Townsend at the State House in Dover on Friday, August 1, 1919. If another member had questions about what is written on this card, they could reach out to the Delaware Branch for clarification. The bottom section of the cards includes "exact statement or remarks." This information is important in 1919 as the suffrage movement reached toward the final stages of achieving a ratification of a national amendment. At this point, the women probably would have taken out all their cards to count exactly who will and will not vote for the amendment. That way, they knew whom to lobby with their very limited time remaining. This specific card includes a statement made by Governor Townsend: "I think the women of the State should be considered well in all interests." In this statement, Townsend verbally gives his support for the right of women to vote. With this information, the NWP members could count him as a vote for ratification.³⁷

Card #3 is specifically interesting for this study (figure 6). On this card, the actual names of the NWP members responsible for recording the remarks are present: Mable Vernon and A.L. Pollitzer. As the amendment inched closer, the NWP became more detailed and precise in their methods for tracking votes. This card, written only months before the ratification of the amendment, includes even more information than those before. It maintains the same structure and organization of information as card #2. However, included in the "exact statement and remarks" section is a statement by Senator L. Heisler Ball that provides information on other senators. Senator Ball states that he will ask Senator Handy, and several others, to "stay over in Dover Monday night so that [he] could present the suffrage situation to them." This is a clear difference from

³⁶ National Woman's Party Congressional Voting Card File, 1915-1954; "Congressional Voting Card #1915.045.003," 1915. National Woman's Party at the Belmont Paul Women's Equality National Monument, Washington, DC.

³⁷ National Woman's Party Congressional Voting Card File, 1915-1954; "Congressional Voting Card #1919.003.001," August, 1, 1919. National Woman's Party at the Belmont Paul Women's Equality National Monument, Washington, DC.

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the way cards had been used before. Originally, the cards only tracked the lobbying efforts of NWP members. By 1920, the NWP used these cards to not only track the progress they had made, but to track the progress that their congressional allies made as well.³⁸

By the 1920s, suffragists in the NWP had learned three key points about their movement: public embarrassment worked better than begging, they needed to militarize; and organization would be key. Milholland, a public face of the NWP and the leader of the Woman's Suffrage Parade of 1913, asked an important question right before her death in 1916: "Mr. President, how long must women wait for liberty?" If one considers the definition of liberty to be "the right to vote," then the NWP helped achieve that goal on August 18, 1920 with the ratification of the 19th amendment. The militant actions of NWP members, including forced help from Wilson, reactions to the Washington Suffrage Parade and the individual lobbying by NWP members of congressional members, all provided advancements that led to ratification.

For members of the NWP the "right to vote" defined liberty because it happened to be the largest injustice facing them. Liberty does not simply refer to "the right to vote." Today, it refers to social, economic and political equality. In 2016, American women reached political liberty far beyond what NWP members in the 1910s ever considered possible with Hillary Clinton being the first woman to be nominated by a major political party as their presidential candidate. Also, in 2015, women made up 20% of the members serving in the United States Senate and 19.3% of members serving in the House of Representatives.³⁹ This is nowhere close to equality, but it is a vast improvement from when NWP members struggled for the right to vote just 100 years prior.

Socially and economically, women have also not yet reached liberty. According to the Institute for Women's Policy and Research, in 2015, full-time white female workers only made 80 cents for every dollar earned by white men, and the figures decline to 60 cents for women of color. The Institute also claims, "women, on average, earn less than men in virtually every single occupation for which there is sufficient earnings data for both men and women."⁴⁰ In 2015, women struggled on the social front as well. On July 21, 2015, the House of

³⁸ National Woman's Party Congressional Voting Card File, 1915-1954; Mabel Vernon and A.L. Pollitzer, Congressional Voting Card #1920.005.001, March 18, 1920. National Woman's Party at the Belmont Paul Women's Equality National Monument, Washington, DC.

³⁹ No Author, "Women in US Congress 2015," Center for American Women and Politics: Rutgers Eagleton Institute of Politics, Accessed November 29, 2016. <http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/women-us-congress-2015>

⁴⁰ No Author, "Pay Equity and Discrimination," Institute for Women's Policy Research, Accessed November 30, 2016. <http://www.iwpr.org/initiatives/pay-equity-and-discrimination>

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Representatives introduced the Defund Planned Parenthood Act of 2015 to their Energy and Commerce Committee. The bill sought to prohibit the availability of federal funds to Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Inc.⁴¹ For many women, Planned Parenthood is a place to receive diagnoses and treatment for cervical, breast and ovarian cancer, endometriosis, human papilloma virus, urinary tract infections, pelvic exams and many other important, and possibly life threatening, health issues.⁴² Women in the 21st century, although enjoying far more liberties than their 20th century predecessors, are still struggling for liberty.

It is important to celebrate the political, economic, and social advances of those who came before us, as many women did by placing their "I voted" stickers on the grave of Susan B. Anthony during the Presidential Election of 2016.⁴³ However, it is also important to remember the NWP and how their strategic tactics made it possible for American women to enjoy far more liberties than they did in the early 20th century. Even more important than remembering these people and how they made achievements, we must be inspired by these women and their tactics to keep fighting for female liberties that are challenged in our society today. Alice Paul once said, "Unless women are prepared to fight politically, they must be content to be ignored politically."⁴⁴ That quote can be expanded based on the way 21st century women view liberty: Unless women are prepared to fight politically, socially and economically they must be content to be ignored politically, socially and economically. I, for one, am no proponent of being ignored.

⁴¹ Diane Black, "Defund Planned Parenthood Act of 2015," Congress.gov, accessed November 30, 2016, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/3134/all-info>

⁴² No Author, "Women's Health," Planned Parenthood, accessed November 30, 2016, <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/womens-health>.

⁴³ Alex Leininger, "Hundreds Flock to Susan B. Anthony's Grave on Election Day," CNN Politics, Accessed November 30, 2016. <http://www.cnn.com/2016/11/08/politics/susan-b-anthony-gravesite-voting-stickers-irpt/>.

⁴⁴ Jamie Stiehm, "When Suffrage Was Cool: Our own Revolutionary, Alice Paul, Crossed the Finish Line to Victory," *Swarthmore College Bulletin*, accessed December 5, 2016. http://bulletin.swarthmore.edu/bulletin-issue-archive/archive_p=1184.html.

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Appendix

Figure 1



"Inez Milholland Boissevain, wearing white cape, seated on white horse at the National American Woman Suffrage Association parade, March 3, 1913, Washington, D.C.," Library of Congress, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/ppmsc.00031/>, date accessed 4/10/2017.

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Figure 2



"Crowd breaking parade up at 9th St., Mch [i.e. March] 3, 1913," Library of Congress, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/cph.3b41753/>, date accessed, 4/10/17.

Figure 3



"Women's suffrage procession in Washington, D.C. 1913, March 3, crowd around Red Cross ambulance," Library of Congress, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/cph.3b41754/>, date accessed, 4/10/2017.

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Figure 4

Congressional Voting Card #1:

Olney, Richard, Jr., Mass. Dem. 14th Dist.

Political History:

Party: Democratic
District: State Representative, Mass. House of Rep. 1902
from Leicester
Congressional: Member of Congress, 14th Dist.
Has he served in State legislature: Yes.
Record on suffrage in state: Opposed, but voted "yes" at
last state election.
Did he introduce any bill concerning suffrage? No.
How did he vote on suffrage bills in legislature? Opposed.
Record on suffrage in Congress.
Will he support the Susan B. Anthony amendment? Probably not.
What influences were paramount in electing him? A strong
progressive candidate who has since rejoined the Republicans.
Polled more than enough votes to defeat the Republican candidate.
What is his present stand on suffrage? Has been regarded as
an opponent of woman suffrage but it is understood he voted
"yes" at last state election.
Record of election (important)

(over)

Property of Sewall-Belmont House Museum

Votes received by the Congressman in his Congressional
district: 13,246 out of 36,286 votes cast. (4 candidates)

Votes received by the suffrage amendment in same district.
11,842.

Information sent in by Miss E. F. Baxter, Holden, Mass.

Property of Sewall-Belmont House Museum

National Woman's Party Congressional Voting Card File, 1915-1954; "Congressional Voting Card
#1915.045.003," 1915, National Woman's Party at the Belmont Paul Women's Equality National
Monument, Washington, DC.

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Figure 5

NATIONAL WOMAN'S PARTY	
Name of person giving statement, Governor Townsend,	Position on S. B. A. Amendmen
Position held by person giving statement, Governor	Favorable: Yes
Political party of persons giving statement,	Non-Committal:
Home state of person giving statement, Delaware	Opposed:
Position on State Suffrage	
Favorable	
Interviewed by Delegation of Delaware Branch, of National Woman's Party, State House, Dover, Friday, August 1st, 1919.	
Exact Statement and Remarks:	
<p>Governor Townsend, addressing the committee, said: " I appreciate your confidence in me and I will give it serious thought. I think the women and the people of the State should be considered well in all interests. You should be absolutely sure that the amendment would be ratified before the Legislature is called; if the Legislature is called, no other business except this amendment will be considered."</p>	
Property of Sewall-Belmont House Museum	

National Woman's Party Congressional Voting Card File, 1915-1954; "Congressional Voting Card #1919.003.001," August, 1, 1919, National Woman's Party at the Blemont Paul Women's Equality National Monument, Washington, DC.

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Figure 6

CONGRESSIONAL UNION			
			Date <u>March 18, 1920</u>
Name of { Representative Senator	State <u>Del.</u>	Position on S. B. A. Amendment Favorable <u>X</u> Non-Committal Opposed	Place of interview <u>Marble Room, The Capitol</u>
<u>L. Heisler Ball</u>	Dist. Party <u>Rep.</u>	Position on State Suffrage	Purpose of Interview <u>Help with Delaware ratification.</u>
Interviewed by <u>Mabel Vernon and A. L. Pollitzer</u>		Address <u>N. W. P. Headquarters</u>	
Exact Statement and Remarks			
<p>Senator Ball told us he was going over to be at Delaware legislature Monday. He sent for Handy, his appointee in Capitol and senator in Delaware legislature, and the four of us went over the poll together, Handy supplying information, declaring he was still opposed. Senator Ball asked Handy to sound out the men</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(over)</p>			
Property of Sewall-Belmont House Museum			

<p>for him, and to get them to agree to stay over in Dover Monday night so that Senator Ball could present the suffrage situation to them. Senator Ball and Congressman Layton both expect to be there Monday.</p>			
Property of Sewall-Belmont House Museum			

National Woman's Party Congressional Voting Card File, 1915-1954; Mabel Vernon and A.L. Pollitzer, Congressional Voting Card #1920.005.001, March 18, 1920, National Woman's Party at the Blemont Paul Women's Equality National Monument, Washington, DC.

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