

Fear of a Black Picket: Anxieties about Racial Equality at Cal State Los Angeles in the 1960s  
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## Introduction

In December 1962, the Los Angeles State College's<sup>1</sup> chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) notched its first local victory in a fight against housing discrimination. The managers of the Monterey Highlands housing tract told black physicist and homebuyer Bobby Liley that no homes in the community were for sale, but white CORE investigators were shown seven available houses.<sup>2</sup> After a successful 35-day sit-in at Monterey Highlands and months of "innumerable delays," the Lileys signed the deed on their home.<sup>3</sup> The negative publicity forced the landowner of the tract to foreclose on his property developer and welcome the Lileys into the community, an act CORE members called "real", not "token" integration. In the *College Times*, the campus newspaper, the protests received significant support from students in a poll that estimated seventy percent of students favored their peers' participation in CORE's pickets and sit-ins.<sup>4</sup> A little more than a year later, in January 1964, CORE decided to take the issue of housing nondiscrimination to campus. In lieu of college-owned housing, the college kept a file of local landlords and realtors offering housing to students, a file that CORE argued did not conform to the requirements of the recently passed and highly contentious Rumford Fair Housing Act. According to the act, landlords were barred from discriminating on the basis of race when renting or selling housing. CORE proposed a solution: require all landlords to promise, in a signed statement, that they would not discriminate or find themselves removed

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<sup>1</sup> CSU Los Angeles was named Los Angeles State College until 1964, and California State College, Los Angeles from 1964 to 1972. All of these names, the CSCLA acronym, and Cal State LA are used interchangeably for the college throughout.

<sup>2</sup> Jay Allen Brown, "Sit-In Over; Students Return to Class Routine," *College Times*, March 3, 1962. All *College Times* articles cited in this paper come from the Digital Repository at CSULA, John F. Kennedy Memorial Library, Special Collections and Archives.

<sup>3</sup> "Core Did It: 9 Months of Protesting Gets House for Family," *College Times*, December 11, 1962.

<sup>4</sup> "Sit-In Participation OK—Students," *College Times*, March 23, 1964.

from the list.<sup>5</sup> The proposal was supported by many on campus in principle but ultimately rejected, by the *College Times* editorial board,<sup>6</sup> the Associated Students' Board of Directors,<sup>7</sup> and newly appointed CSCLA president Franklyn A. Johnson,<sup>8</sup> on the grounds that enforcement of such a policy was impossible. In April 1964, CORE members responded by taking to their tried and proven tactic: the picket line.<sup>9</sup>

And so, the initial support that CSCLA CORE received from its peers ran dry. The *College Times* opinion pages led with angry letters from foes and former friends alike, criticizing CORE's decision to picket president Johnson's office and inauguration, and their refusal to engage in civic dialogue with campus administrators. If support was indeed as high as the 1962 poll reported, what caused such a backlash? What critical turn took place when the picket line moved from the Monterey Highlands track to president Johnson's door? The answer lies in three forms of racialized anxieties expressed in the opinion pages and protest coverage from the *College Times* over five months of frequent and vocal reactions to CORE's tactics. These anxieties manifested themselves in different ways and at different times through the school community's calls for restraint and caution, and formed the intellectual foundation of arguments for resistance to black protest.

First was an anxiety regarding the nature and consequences of civil disobedience.

Students at Cal State LA in the early 1960s were uneasy with the idea of protest. This key part of their disdain for the CORE pickets formed from a value system that privileged civil discourse

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<sup>5</sup> Dennis McCarbery, "Anti-Discrimination Housing Plan Given," *College Times*, January 10, 1964.

<sup>6</sup> "CORE Proposal," *College Times*, January 10, 1964.

<sup>7</sup> Ernie Ptashne, "BOD Downs CORE Proposal: Housing Discrimination Resolution Loses, 6-5," *College Times*, February 28, 1964.

<sup>8</sup> "Johnson Downs CORE Signed Statement Clause," *College Times*, March 20, 1964.

<sup>9</sup> Malcolm Schwartz, "CORE to Picket Administration: Housing File Fight Brings Demonstration," *College Times*, April 3, 1964.

and equality in debate as the most virtuous form of dissent. In this system, students critical of CORE infantilized the activists' efforts as "stupid," "embarrassing," a "waste of time," and sometimes criminal. Campus critics instead encouraged dissenters to come together at the bargaining table to hash out their differences. In more hostile cases, critics bluntly told CORE to stop marching, give up, and grow up. This infantilization and criminalization of CORE was a highly racialized one and continued a historical pattern where critics fearful of equality portrayed civil rights activists as childish and defiant.

Second was a prevailing anxiety among many Americans of the period regarding the involvement of the state in private affairs. Many Los Angeles citizens in the 1950s and 1960s were highly hostile to government intervention, especially if that intervention did not benefit white homeowners:<sup>10</sup> conservative city officials like mayor Norris Poulson scrapped public housing programs with the support of real estate lobbies under the guise that such practices were emblematic of Communism.<sup>11</sup> Critics of black civil rights activists used these same redbaiting tactics were to discredit housing integration protests, and demonized groups like CORE as communist threats.<sup>12</sup> This culture of redbaiting, coupled with the national Cold War rhetoric of the 1950s, generated in white homeowners an antipathy towards any efforts by the state to intervene in matters of housing. Critics of CORE's protest on campus used this rhetoric to frame the housing file petition not as a matter of civil rights, but as a way for CSCLA (an extension of the state) to threaten an owner's right to sell or rent their private property to whomever they saw

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<sup>10</sup> Ironically, these same detractors welcomed and encouraged state and federal policies that benefited home ownership, such as mortgage subsidies. See Alex Avila, "Vanilla Suburbs," in *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight: Fear and Fantasy in Suburban Los Angeles*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2006, p. 40.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> John R. Rachal, "'The Long, Hot Summer': The Mississippi Response to Freedom Summer, 1964," *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 84, No. 4, Fall 1999, p. 318.

fit.

Lastly, CSCLA students expressed an anxiety towards the values and behaviors of blacks, due to a profound misunderstanding of the lived black experience and an ignorance (or perhaps, rejection) of their own role within institutional racism. Student comments on blacks and their values in the *College Times* suggest that a significant amount of the college, including some who were sympathetic to CORE's cause in spirit, understood blacks as being fundamentally different from whites. In these articles, blacks were ascribed negative qualities: they were called lazy, uneducated, without culture, unmasculine, or divinely ordered to live separately from whites. With only a racist mythology of blacks to guide them, these students either saw integration as impossible or only achievable if blacks adopted white values instead.

### **Historiography & Scholarship**

Scholarship on the history of white opposition to a black push for civil rights legislation in the Los Angeles area at the time of CORE's 1964 protest is extremely limited. The historiography of the civil rights movement prior to 1965 generally concerns itself with activity in Southern states.<sup>13</sup> A small but precious gem of research comes from Bruce G. Merritt's study of heated tension between leaders and laity of Episcopal parishes in the city of Glendale over support of Proposition 14, the law that repealed the Rumford Act two months after CORE carried their signs to CSCLA.<sup>14</sup> Although Merritt focuses on the ways in which the church community resolved its dispute, his findings on the motivations behind the resistance to antidiscriminatory housing laws confirm the work presented here. Helen Lefkowitz's history of college protest

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<sup>13</sup> Steven F. Lawson, "Freedom Then, Freedom Now: The Historiography of the Civil Rights Movement," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 96, No. 2, April 1991.

<sup>14</sup> Bruce G. Merritt, "Faith and Fair Housing: An Episcopal Parish Church in the 1964 Debate over Proposition 14," *Southern California Quarterly*. Vol. 95, No. 3, Fall 2013, pp. 284-316.

movements and the motivating forces behind them gives insight to the way in which students became activists, but her focus remains on more radical campuses like UC Berkeley and only addresses a white rejection of black protest with the advent of the Black Power movement, still three years away from the time of CORE's protest.<sup>15</sup>

The body of research about Cal State LA's history is limited to a book and handful of articles. Margaret Hart's book on the history of the college's Educational Opportunity Program, *Educating the Excluded*, picks up the issue of representation and student dissent in the late 1960s with no attention paid to earlier activism by civil rights groups at the college, but makes clear that in the early 1960s Cal State LA was a predominantly white campus, with little presence of students of color.<sup>16</sup> Hart also makes a strong case for the importance of direct action by students to effect change on college campuses, and a similar culture of resistance to policies of preference. Hart's conclusions are corroborated by Jimmy Solis' article on the creation of the Chicano Studies department, which also gives valuable history on the ways in which students on the margins of the college community negotiated with administration.<sup>17</sup> My paper is in some ways a contrast to Solis' work. This instance of student activism led to the successful use of confrontational methods, and elicited a white student backlash absent in his Chicano activist case study.

The conceptual and methodological spirit of my essay owes greatly to Stephen Steinberg's 1995 book *Turning Back: The Retreat of Racial Justice in American Thought and*

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<sup>15</sup> Helen Horowitz Lefkowitz, "The 1960s and the Transformations of Campus Cultures," *History of Education Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 1, Spring 1986, pp. 1-38.

<sup>16</sup> Margaret Hart, *Educating the Excluded: What Led to the mandate for Educational Opportunity at California State University*, Educational Opportunity Program at Cal State LA, Los Angeles, 2016.

<sup>17</sup> Jimmy Solis, "A History to Call Our Own: Establishing the Nation's First Chicano Studies Department at California State College, Los Angeles," *Perspectives: A Journal of Historical Inquiry*, Vol. 41, Winter 2014, pp. 73-90.

*Policy*. In *Turning Back*, Steinberg critiques among others the ideological foundations of Gunnar Myrdal and Daniel Patrick Moynihan's studies of black communities, recognizing the anxieties present in their prescriptions for the "Negro problem" and how white academic liberals resisted proposing policies of preference to counteract the structural elements of racism.<sup>18</sup> Steinberg's conclusions reached further with the evidence presented than the traditional rigor of historical scholarship might accept. He attempts to extrapolate instances of racism by policy writers like Myrdal and Moynihan from their reports, but presents very little evidence of personal remarks from either. Steinberg's approach is adapted here to a base of more candid and personal opinions available through the pages of the *College Times*. Sara Ahmed's tremendous example of critical race theory, "The Phenomenology of Whiteness," was key to establishing a robust racial critique of manifestations of whiteness in language, space, and institutions, as well as how this pervasive whiteness normalizes certain bodies and behaviors while others stand out as "bodies out of place."<sup>19</sup> Ahmed's critique of black bodies out of place and behaviors coded as nonwhite within the academy are the inspiration for my paper's analytical lens, without which I would have no way to excavate the types of thoughts and emotions from the arguments of the authors described here.

### **Part I: Fear of a Pro-Black Picket**

Students opposed to CORE's protest at Cal State LA had a specific conception of the appropriateness—in the time, manner, composition, location, and target—of civil disobedience. Many CSCLA students thought that protest was justified, so long as it was off campus, without

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<sup>18</sup> Stephen Steinberg, *Turning Back: The Retreat of Racial Justice in American Thought and Policy*, Boston, Beacon Press, 2001.

<sup>19</sup> Sara Ahmed, "A Phenomenology of Whiteness," *Feminist Theory*, Vol. 8, No. 2, August 2007, pp. 149-168.

pickets, without many students, and in a way that did not antagonize the college. These students believed the key to social change was to work within the accepted system of reform, and that civil rights activists only hurt their cause by confronting whites and risking arrest and jail time. This preference for a politics of civility was part of a collegian identity shared by students as members of an institution that privileged open discourse.<sup>20</sup> Students codified protest as an infantile and criminal action and associated the act with other negative qualities ascribed to blacks: impatience, impulsiveness, irrationality, and an aversion to compromise. Historically black colleges excepted, the American college of the 1960s was a white institution in both majority enrollment and its values. Lewis R. Gordon criticized Hegel's white-coded understanding of the universal, and by proxy, the academic, when he said, "White people are universal. It is said that Black people are not."<sup>21</sup> This distinction, an unconscious element of academia's collective values at CSCLA, made the presence of black bodies (more specifically in this case, the presence of those who advocated for black bodies) an unwelcome jolt to the institution.

An important factor that influenced student opinions on protests was the perception that civil disobedience was both criminal and violent. Reports on CORE on the *College Times* made frequent references to the arrests and sentencing of CORE members. A December 1963 issue placed a story on the sentencing of faculty CORE member Gerald H. Farber and CSCLA CORE leader Daniel Cohen as the top headline for the day.<sup>22</sup> In an earlier article plainly titled "CORE Not Violent—Farber," professor Farber defended himself against charges of battery and disturbing the peace at a protest of the Los Angeles City Board of Education. Farber insisted that

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<sup>20</sup> Lefkowitz, "Campus Cultures," p. 11

<sup>21</sup> Ahmed, "Phenomenology."

<sup>22</sup> "LASC Prof., CORE Leader, Found Guilty," *College Times*, November 12, 1963.

CORE's tactics were non-violent, and that the only violent action was that of the police, who left protestors with cuts and bruises before the arrest.<sup>23</sup> CSCLA students, who likely wished to avoid any association with criminal elements, may have sympathized with protestors but did not join out of fear. In the tense climate of civil rights protests, associating with black activism was nearly a crime in itself.

Although the 1962 poll cited in my introduction boasted a seventy percent approval rating of the CORE picket at Monterey Highlands (a figure that is impossible to confirm without examining the scope and methods of the survey), the comments that accompanied the survey suggested this approval was highly conditional: business senior Howard Drake and zoology junior Bob Allen each supported the right to protest, but expressed reservations about CORE being conflated with LASC as a whole, and by association, their own image as members of the college.<sup>24</sup> Allen argued, "if it is detrimental to the college as an institution, I'd say that I was not in favor."<sup>25</sup> Both Drake and Allen were keenly aware of the negative connotations of protest and had no interest in having the college associated with CORE. Such an association carried the weight of being sympathetic to uncivil behavior.

Other students polled assumed that civil rights for black Americans would arrive in a natural progression of American politics, one that should not be pushed for aggressively to reduce the ire of those who held power. June Carr, a psychology junior, stated that "[civil rights activism] is forcing an issue that will eventually evolve itself into a solution. It doesn't do any good to aggravate people who will only strengthen their original beliefs."<sup>26</sup> It appeared, to some students, that the comfort of whites in power was at the very least of tactical importance, if not

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<sup>23</sup> "CORE Not Violent—Farber," *College Times*, November 8, 1963.

<sup>24</sup> "Sit-In OK," *College Times*.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

more important out of sheer ignorance or indifference to the increasingly difficult lives of black Americans. Carr's argument, while politically calculated, was a clear privileging of white emotions over black suffering.

In some cases, the dislike of protest was expressed with outright hostility and a shared feeling that the CORE activists had overstayed their welcome. A report of the first days of CORE picketing on campus titled "Let Me Eat In Peace!"<sup>27</sup> included several scornful comments. Senior Frank Rembley claimed CORE didn't "have a leg to stand on. They're just doing it for publicity."<sup>28</sup> Fellow senior Jack Wilson sounded off in concert about the unbecoming behavior: "It's ridiculous, they're making fools of themselves."<sup>29</sup> An unnamed graduate student balked at CORE's perceived impropriety and said, "it's a shame that at the college level, that people lose their sense of judgement and reason. Their appearance is indicative of their class."<sup>30</sup> Some students, once friendly to CORE's struggle, took a dramatic turn in their opinion. An anonymous sophomore bemoaned, "I can appreciate their feelings and have in the past. However, they're running it into the ground. I'm sick and tired of hearing CORE, CORE, CORE, screaming equality. They've succeeded in getting their point across with pressure but have gone one step further in becoming a pest." This quote calls to mind Ahmed once more, speaking on how critiques of whiteness by nonwhite bodies in the academy are often perceived today:

Our talk about whiteness is read as a sign of ingratitude, of failing to be grateful for the hospitality we have received by virtue of our arrival. It is this very structural position of being the guest, or the stranger, the one who receives hospitality, which keeps us in certain places, even when you move up.<sup>31</sup>

It was not enough for CORE to be welcomed on campus. If they wanted to dissent without

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<sup>27</sup> Malcolm Schwartz, "Let Me Eat in Peace!" *College Times*, April 14, 1964.

<sup>28</sup> Schwartz, "Let Me Eat."

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Ahmed, "Phenomenology."

backlash, they had to do so in ways harmonious with the existing campus culture. CORE's deviation was therefore perceived as an ungrateful act that insulted the values of the campus. CORE, as Ahmed's guest in this case, was to behave as such and conform to the common campus culture: as civilized citizens. Holding a protest sign was, for these students, an expression of ingratitude, of intransigent blackness.

Another remarkable expression of perceived ingratitude through CORE's tactics came from *College Times* editor, Associated Students rep at-large, and Latino student Felix Gutierrez. Soon after CORE's proposal made it to the Board of Directors' desk, Gutierrez took to the editorial page in his February 25<sup>th</sup> "Time For Action"<sup>32</sup> piece, giving the full support of the editorial board to CORE's housing file proposal. In a reversal from former editor Dennis McCarbery, who refused to have the *College Times* become a "policing agent" of whether discrimination is taking place,<sup>33</sup> Gutierrez called the proposal "especially important at a college with such a mixed student body as CSCLA" and enforced a new advertising policy in the *College Times* making classified ads available only to those offering jobs and housing to students without discriminating on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, or ancestry."<sup>34</sup> Gutierrez continued his attack on opposition when CORE's proposal met rejection by the Board of Directors and CSCLA president Franklyn A. Johnson, printing a front-page report on the inflexibility of administration and student government under his own byline.<sup>35</sup>

CORE's move to picket President Johnson's office and his impending inauguration in May proved to be the breaking point for Gutierrez. In a May 3<sup>rd</sup> editorial titled "Cheap

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<sup>32</sup> "Time for Action," *College Times*, February 25, 1964.

<sup>33</sup> "CORE Proposal," *College Times*

<sup>34</sup> "New Classified Ad Policy," *College Times*, March 20, 1964.

<sup>35</sup> Felix Gutierrez, "CORE Goes to Administration: 1600 Petitioners Favor Fair Housing Proposal," *College Times*, March 13, 1964.

Publicity,” Gutierrez denounced CORE’s “attention-getting maneuver” and claimed, “this action is designed to merely antagonize the administration.” Having exhausted the avenues of fair petitioning, and likely wishing not to risk his positions on both the editorial board and the Board of Directors, Gutierrez reduced his fervor and turn on his once-allies, again beating the drum of respectability: “We are forced to conclude that CORE is attempting to gather for itself cheap publicity in the local press. The result unfortunately will also be to reflect the college in an unnecessarily poor light.”<sup>36</sup>

Gutierrez and the editorial board went to the pulpit once more weeks before president Johnson’s inauguration, criticizing a botched CORE protest of the World’s Fair in Flushing, New York as an analogy for the unrest on campus. Notwithstanding the differences between the relatively tame CSCLA core chapter and its much more militant Brooklyn counterpart,<sup>37</sup> a distinction the editors clearly wished to blur, the *College Times* used the story as a cautionary tale of overreach. Ahmed’s “guest-host” structural analogy arose again in the piece with the following argument:

Minorities are entitled to the rights of civilized society; so why should they try to give the impression of being irrational trouble-makers? ... If the militant civil rights organizations don’t come to their senses soon, the tide of public opinion that flowed so strongly this year in favor of their cause is in danger of turning into a flood of resentment that washes out all advances that have been made in bringing about the America that should be.<sup>38</sup>

Gutierrez, a minority himself, was sensitive to the reactions such an unwelcome guest might elicit from their hosts, and believed that the most politically expedient course was one of appeasement. CORE’s decision to discard the sacred olive branch of discourse and arm

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<sup>36</sup> “Cheap Publicity,” *College Times*, April 3, 1964.

<sup>37</sup> Craig Turnbull, “‘Please Make No Demonstrations Tomorrow’: The Brooklyn Congress of Racial Equality and Symbolic Protest at the 1964-65 World’s Fair,” *Australasian Journal of American Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 1, July 1998, pp. 22-41.

<sup>38</sup> “Stalling Civil Rights,” *College Times*, April 24, 1964.

themselves with protest signs to protest on campus was a vote of no confidence in Gutierrez's politics of civility. For students like Gutierrez, it was too difficult to reconcile their desire to end segregation with their own anxieties about the perceived inappropriateness of black protest.

To this effect Russ Bader, public relations commissioner at CSCLA, proposed the creation of a Human Relations Committee in the midst of the CORE controversy with the goal of "better understanding between racial groups" at the college, "an effort to solve problems at a conference table instead of in a picket line." This proposal was a direct response to CORE's pickets. By rendering both sides as "not Caucasians and Negroes, but Americans," Bader argued that a collegial atmosphere of solidarity would form and turn shouts into handshakes. This was the administration's appeal to civility, to look beyond race. By disregarding difference, however, the college only antagonized blacks further as self-segregationists who were too infantile to see reason and walk without prejudice to the bargaining table. Bader's proposal was in fact an attempt to police the behavior of protestors, with the aim of making CORE operate within a white system of discourse that implicitly limited their political power. The objective of CORE's protest was to stand out on campus, to intentionally elicit a moment where, as Sara Ahmed describes, bodies appear "out of place."<sup>39</sup> For Ahmed, these are "moments of political and personal trouble,"<sup>40</sup> where backlash can take place. The responses above confirm that the pickets served their purpose. Had CORE complied, they would have no longer appeared out of place and stripped themselves of their greatest political tool, one that proved to be decisive for many activists in the years of protest to come.

## **Part II: Fear of an Interventionist State**

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<sup>39</sup> Ahmed, "Phenomenology"

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

The argument against CORE's protest was not only one of modes of visibility and expression, but also one that rejected the role of the state in enforcing racial equality. CORE's insistence to have the college enforce antidiscrimination was for many students an invasion of the federal government on the individual's right to personal property. Although many whites in California agreed in principle that racial discrimination was wrong, they struggled to outlaw discrimination "by private citizens dealing with their own property."<sup>41</sup> The political climate of the early 1960s still rang with McCarthyist fear of Communist infiltration of the government. For those under this conviction, any policy granting state regulation of private affairs was suspect. The "creeping socialism" of a federal government that expanded significantly during the New Deal era and threatened to do so again with the Rumford Act and the upcoming Civil Rights Act was seen, as Bruce Merrit writes, "as a dangerous incursion by the government into an individual's property rights."<sup>42</sup> As many civil rights activists advocated laws regulating private actions,<sup>43</sup> groups like CORE ran a growing risk of being associated with Communist authoritarianism, especially as these groups moved further to the left. Far-right groups like the John Birch Society frequently denounced CORE and proposals for civil rights legislation.<sup>44</sup> Advocacy for blacks, by this malignment, was considered anti-American. The fact that in all but explicit terms the question of Proposition 14 was an issue of race meant that conservatives could use the fear of an authoritarian black-friendly state to promote segregationist policy.

Though few homeowners ever explicitly opposed the Rumford act for its limits on racial discrimination, there is no doubt that there was a racial preference for selling and renting homes

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<sup>41</sup> Merrit, "Faith," 294.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 295.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 294.

<sup>44</sup> "Civil Rights Bill Hit by Rousselot," *College Times*, May 8, 1964.

to whites.<sup>45</sup> The presence of a black family in a formerly all-white community signaled for other white residents a drop in property values due to prejudices of black being associated with crime and poverty.<sup>46</sup> With their economic stability in jeopardy, and fearing false accusations of bigotry, many whites in California vehemently opposed policies of “forced” integration.<sup>47</sup> Indeed, the ire of California’s homeowners made itself known in the ballot box that summer when Proposition 13 invalidated the Rumford Act, until a Supreme Court decision deemed the referendum unconstitutional in 1969.<sup>48</sup>

These criticisms made their way into the *College Times* opinion pages. Graduate student Mike D. Antonovich, of the most vocal opponents of the CORE proposal, was an active politician both as a student and in his later career in the state assembly and on the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. In the 1963-64 school year, Antonovich was a rep at-large on the Associated Students’ Board of Directors and led the charge in the 6-5 decision that rejected the housing discrimination law.<sup>49</sup> He was also a frequent contributor to the *College Times* and made his presence known as an articulate and—for his time—moderate conservative thinker on campus.

On the eve of the Board of Directors’ vote on the housing proposal, Antonovich expressed his resistance to policies of preference in a defense of accusations that presidential candidate Barry Goldwater supported segregation. Ever the careful politician, he distilled Goldwater’s philosophy in his typical pragmatic prose: “[Goldwater] is for extending the rights

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 294.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 296.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ptashne, “BOD Downs CORE Proposal,” *College Times*.

of the Negro without infringing these same rights as they apply to other people.”<sup>50</sup> With this rhetorical sleight of hand, Antonovich privileged the rights of an undefined “other people” over those of blacks. The threat of tyranny by blacks implicitly summoned by Antonovich was similar to the fear stoking of the last time the American state attempted to enforce civil rights legislation during the Reconstruction, one that California homeowners felt deeply.

These anxieties were not often expressed during the months of CORE’s protest, but appeared frequently over the debate of Proposition 14’s constitutionality in late 1964. It is likely that the thoughts on both events were closely related. Antonovich defended Proposition 14 citing that the states with the worst racial violence, New York and Pennsylvania, also had the “most racial violence of any state.”<sup>51</sup> Antonovich used this as a response to claims by civil rights law supporters that argued the repeal would result in violence. He further suggested an atmosphere of adjudication without due process and the tyranny of a “kangaroo court,” claiming that the state’s Fair Employment Commission, not a court, would have final say over discrimination claims.<sup>52</sup> Professors Burton Henry and Jerry Caplan refuted Antonovich’s claims in their own letters to the editor, explaining that recourses of judicial appeal were available to those who felt wrongfully accused by the Fair Employment Commission.<sup>53 54</sup> It is possible that Antonovich was caught up in the fervor of rhetoric from the conservative politicians he admired to check his own facts, but his very fidelity to this fallacious party line suggested that the fears summoned by conservatives were intended to be racialized, not simply a matter of fundamental rights for all.

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<sup>50</sup> Mike D. Antonovich, “Goldwater’s Record Supports Integration,” *College Times*, February 25, 1964.

<sup>51</sup> Michael W. Vanni and Mike D. Antonovich, “Conjectures and Refutations,” *College Times*, October 7, 1964.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Burton Henry, Letter to the editor, *College Times*, October 12, 1964.

<sup>54</sup> Jerry S. Caplan, “Business Law Prof Hits Antonovich Pro-14 Letter,” *College Times*, October 16, 1964.

### **Part III: Fear of Blackness**

Where the first section of my paper focused on racialized arguments against black advocacy, this section analyzes explicit objections to the presence, agency, and equality of blacks on the grounds that blacks had inherent moral, social, and civic deficiencies. Some campus critics of CORE argued that these deficiencies could be overcome through slow progress, while others saw the differences between blacks and whites as fundamentally unbridgeable. In their editorials, non-black students at CSCLA expressed highly inaccurate understandings of blacks and their lived experience both inside and outside of the south, as well as how their own role as non-blacks outside still contributed to the secondary status of blacks. The popularization of black voices and perspectives was only just beginning to crest in white American consciousness, and the scholarship and arguments that would later move whites to reassess the issue of race were still being written in the first half of the 1960s. This fundamental confusion or ignorance of the institutional elements of racism and the causes of “the Negro Problem” created a platform of racial resentment for critics of the picket.

*College Times* editors Dennis McCarbery and Judy Tucker expressed two seemingly different perspectives over the issue of racial prejudice in October of 1963. McCarbery penned an editorial titled “Hypocrisy,” with the aim of discrediting what he considered to be common arguments from bigots. In his well-intentioned critique, McCarbery betrayed his own prejudices and misconceptions of black Americans: “They say [blacks] are uneducated, dirty, lazy, and copy the ways of ‘white’ America. On the surface this statement is generally true. But what the hell do they expect? If you can’t get to...higher education, the natural outcome is a lack of

education.”<sup>55</sup> McCarbery argued these qualities had an environmental factor, but framed the situation as a matter of environments resulting in poor character, not a rational choice in the face of limited opportunity. His belief that this is a deficiency of character and not rational choice appeared again when he remarked, “Although the American Negro has kept part of his native ways, expressed today in various forms of jazz music, he has no one to look to for the proper way to look and act.”<sup>56</sup> Aside from the obvious racialized image conjured by the phrase “native ways,” McCarbery failed to grasp the complexity of black culture by assuming jazz was the only means of cultural expression for blacks. Jazz was the form of black cultural expression most consumed by non-blacks, and so, was the one with which he was most familiar. His belief that blacks sorely needed role models to look up to implied that blacks had no leadership figures. What was more likely was that McCarbery did not know who these role models were. Daniel P. Moynihan’s report on black families two years later presented similar conclusions about the cultural elements ailing the black community, comments that were disparaged by civil rights activists as being deeply misunderstanding of their values and material circumstances.<sup>57</sup>

The response penned by managing editor Judy Tucker, titled “Racial Harmony,” refuted McCarbery’s stance on the moral dearth of black communities: “Don’t sell the Negro short. Perhaps his views are different than ours, but they are his values...they don’t need to copy anyone, and what we think shouldn’t matter.”<sup>58</sup> Tucker, however, minced no words with her beliefs on how equality should be achieved and whether blacks and whites should integrate and live together. In her view, blacks had already come a long way and had a long way to go. “Sure, 100 years have gone by [since Reconstruction], but conditions are improving and will continue

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<sup>55</sup> Dennis McCarbery, “Hypocrisy,” *College Times*, October 4, 1963.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Steinberg, *Turning Back*.

<sup>58</sup> Judy Tucker, “Racial Harmony,” *College Times*, November 9, 1963.

to improve.”<sup>59</sup> Another hundred years did not seem like a bad thing for Tucker, who was far removed from the experience of living while black and likely saw the desegregation laws of the 1950s as one of many great steps forward since the failure from overreach of Reconstruction.<sup>60</sup> Tucker invoked Reconstruction as a cautionary tale for civil rights activists, as if to remind that the state had attempted radical change once before, only to doom their cause.

Tucker then turned the onus of racial equality onto black Americans and claimed, “the Negro doesn’t know what he is fighting for. Singing, marching, fasting; these don’t say a thing to me.”<sup>61</sup> It is unclear if these two statements had anything to do with each other. Black civil rights activists clearly articulated their goals to whites on their signs and speeches. That Tucker did not receive a message from the efforts of activists was not a sign of an ineffective movement, but a sign that she did not know much about what blacks wanted and. That Tucker saw her conclusion as sufficient evidence to discredit blacks suggests she did not much care about what they wanted. Tucker’s last frank opinions made her stance on racial integration clear:

Let us join only when necessary...I don’t mind going to school or working with Negroes, but I don’t want to live with them or watch my children marry into a Negro family. And I really don’t think the Negroes want their children living with and marrying whites...Because God made people of different races for a reason, and races should live and marry with their race; they have something in common with each other.<sup>62</sup>

Tucker saw race as a fundamentally dividing characteristic between people, as something entrenched in a biological order organized intentionally by a higher power. Her argument rang

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> The idea that Reconstruction failed due to overreach was a common historical notion until the late 1960s. Eric Foner’s historiography of the Reconstruction explains that a revisionist turn redeeming Reconstruction only took hold in the 1960s, interestingly, as a part of the civil rights movement. See Eric Foner, “Reconstruction Revisited,” *Reviews in American History*, Vol. 10, No. 4, Dec. 1982, p. 83.

<sup>61</sup> Tucker, “Racial Harmony.”

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

similar to that of critics of fully integrated society in Merritt's Glendale study. Some conservative parishoners also saw racial distinctions as immutable and believed it was best for blacks and whites to remain separate.<sup>63</sup> Her explicit view on race left little to wonder as to her opposition to black activism.

Other students understood black activists and their methods as evidence of a fundamental black absence of self-worth. These students saw blacks as lacking certain assertive, masculine qualities to pull themselves out of their secondary position in American society. Charles Moreland framed the issue of black civil rights as such in his editorial titled "Out of Place":

"The picture of the Negro in America's mind is dirty! The Negro in America neither claims nor commands the respect of anyone because he generally lacks self-respect...Who can respect housekeepers, cooks, chauffeurs, gardeners, porters, students, doctors, or lawyers even GROVELING on HANDS and KNEES in the streets DEMANDING justice and equality? I can't, and I believe very few people can HONESTLY say they do...Were the energies alone of CORE, NAACP, and the SCLC directed toward improving the Negro image in America, we would need no demonstrations...the Negro could stand tall and look right into the eye of his oppressor and demand, rather than kneel and beg, for his basic HUMAN rights and these rights would be granted, however grudgingly, out of respect rather than pressure or pity."<sup>64</sup>

Moreland's rant, with all its capitalized emphasis, moralized to black activists and denounced them for supposedly begging for justice. Moreland's saw black protest as spineless, and imagined a scenario where racism ended with one simple bold act of manhood. We are left to wonder if Moreland had ever once listened to a black activist speak. Once more, CSCLA students' physical and cultural distance from black voices and opinions showed its weight. Moreland constructed a fallible straw man from his perceptions of blacks, an image of the black activist composed of secondhand experiences. His simple solution of "standing tall" and acting like a man, much like his limited understanding of blacks, was nothing short of fantasy.

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<sup>63</sup> Merritt, "Faith."

<sup>64</sup> Charles Moreland, "Out of Place," *College Times*, November 8 1963.

### **Epilogue: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love The March**

Likely to the chagrin of the long list of critics referenced in this essay, CORE's threat to picket Franklyn A. Johnson's inauguration succeeded in passing the housing file proposal.<sup>65</sup> In the early 1960s, issues of civil rights existed very much in the periphery of white CSCLA's students' consciousness at the time of CORE's protest. What little information these students received of goings on in the South was likely filtered through the anxieties expressed by mainstream media and their immediate social and familial groups, and was certainly lacking in any direct engagement with black voices. As a result, their views of blacks and the civil rights movement carried the fears of the perspectives that informed them: a fear of black invasion of white spaces, a fear of forced integration by the state, and a fear of what they had heard to be true about blacks themselves. With nothing to lose on their part, these students more easily produced criticisms and excuses than expressions of empathy for black activists.

Many of those same students would very soon have a great deal to lose, enough to change their tune on protest. President Lyndon Johnson soon called for more men to be drafted to fight the war in Vietnam and the frequent arguments for civil discourse in the *College Times* opinion pages all but vanished. Student protests against the war were frequent after 1966 and reached multiple parts of the campus community.<sup>66</sup> The cause for racial equality and the antiwar movement dovetailed, and those who opposed the war borrowed heavily from CORE's playbook. The *College Times* reported in 1967 that, as part of a national Vietnam Week, two buses of CSCLA students left for San Francisco to join an antiwar march. The same article

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<sup>65</sup> Malcolm Schwartz, "Johnson Accepts Signature Requirement, Picket Cancelled," *College Times*, May 15, 1964.

<sup>66</sup> Don Ober, "Angry Arts Weeks," *College Times*, June 28, 1967.

referenced a speech by Pasadena CORE's former chairman Don Wheedlin titled "The Negro and the War."<sup>67</sup> These students learned what black activists had been arguing for centuries: when an individual understands that their life is on the line, extraordinary efforts must be taken to ensure survival.

This turn, however, did not mean that all students necessarily learned anything about racial protest in the process. An anonymous critic in 1966 wrote to the *College Times* in response to a CORE shutdown of a speech featuring ousted Alabama sheriff and Selma Bloody Sunday architect Jim Clark. The author invoked Abraham Lincoln, saying "Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves."<sup>68</sup> The sentiment rings in our college campuses once more as students continue to debate the appropriateness and nature of protest. Disagreements continue on and off campus over the appropriateness of activists shutting down conservative pundit Ben Shapiro's speech and occupying CSULA president William A. Covino's office in February 2016.<sup>69</sup> Here again is a debate about what speech is protected and how we view the expressions of our peers—one that this history suggests never really left our school. What appears as true as it did in 1964 is this: a careful examination these arguments and their underlying anxieties and sentiments should give us pause to reflect. This moment to think twice, to evaluate why we might oppose direct action, may lead us to understand why it is so often justified.

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<sup>67</sup> "Vietnam Week Closes," *College Times*, April 14, 1967.

<sup>68</sup> "Denial of Freedom," *College Times*, January 7, 1966.

<sup>69</sup> Hannah Jacobsen, "Ben Shapiro's Arrival on Campus Sparks Mass Protest," *University Times*, February 29, 2016.

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