LOS ANGELES AND WILLIAM H. PARKER:
RACE, VICE, AND POLICE DURING THE RED SCARE

By

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Abstract

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Los Angeles and William H. Parker: Race, Vice, and Policing during the Red Scare

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This body of work focuses on the precarious relationship between former Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) Chief William Parker and the African and Mexican American communities, leftists, civil rights workers, and gay men. It examines the years between 1950 to 1966. Beginning in 1950, when Parker was appointed Chief of the LAPD, these communities experienced hyper-policing in the form of intimidation, racial profiling, and police brutality. It produced a mechanism of social control that resulted in residents expressing their righteous anger by forming political organizations to confront a notorious police department in the mid-1960s. Because these methods in policing were just beginning, I argue that we must revisit the Parker era to understand how the LAPD became a model for other police departments to emulate. Surveillance strategies such as collecting arrest data became institutionalized and used to target communities who opposed Parker's right-wing ideology during the Cold War era.

Parker used his position of authority to criminalize people who challenged his conservative ideology. Aggregated data became a powerful enforcement tool and applied as a pretext to assign more police officers to monitor these communities. Moreover, Parker instilled fear among white communities by fabricating moral panics that were also supported by local media outlets, such as the powerful *Los Angeles Times*. The result created racial animus and political fissures that are still seen today.

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Chapter One:

Introduction to "Los Angeles and William H. Parker: Race, Vice, and Policing during the Red Scare"

In 1990, three Latino twelve-year-old boys walked a block north of the intersection of Hollywood and Sunset Blvd in Los Angeles. The intersection converged with Virgil Avenue where traffic was a nightmare. It was a busy intersection that many avoided because of its confusing design. Often, motorists found this area perplexing and frustrating, including pedestrians who crossed the intersection. The boys embarked on an alternative route north of the intersection on Commonwealth Avenue. It was a warm sunny day in the late afternoon. They conversed without a care in the world when suddenly, they were stopped by the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD). They were detained and illegally searched by two white male police officers. The older gray-haired officer led the interrogation while his partner remained in the background silently observing the senior officer taking command of the questioning. The presumed supervisor whipped out his notebook to ask invasive questions, such as, "Where are you going?" "Where are you coming from?" and "Where do you live?" The boys replied nervously, "We're meeting our friends to play basketball." The senior officer scowled at the boys; his facial features filled with what could only be interpreted as revulsion accompanied with furrowed eyebrows as he cantankerously wrote down their answers. All three boys lived within a block from each other and were eventually forced to pile up in the back of their police cruiser to be taken home.

On that day, the innocence of three young boys was disrupted. Baffled by the invasive questioning and detention, the boys became vehemently aware of how the LAPD could randomly stop, detain, and search someone without "probable" cause. Unaware of how the LAPD operated historically, this would not be the last time that each of the boys would encounter this form of

aggressive policing. It was a day etched in the memories of all three boys. Incidents such as this transpired across the city during an era when hyper-policing was ubiquitous. The Community Resources against Street Hoodlums (CRASH) units had just been unleashed by the LAPD. The boys knew nothing of the policy and Reagan-era politics that sought to curb crime through military weaponry and aggressive policing.[1] Working-class communities of color had endured this mode of monitoring before the World War II era, sometimes ending violently and at other times in death. In either scenario, violence has always been endemic to the culture of the LAPD. These boys were fortunate that no harm came to them on this day, but it left them pondering and trying to make sense of the situation.

Other people were tangled in this web of confusion. Many working-class and poor, nonwhite people in Los Angeles have experienced some form of racism from the LAPD. The violent legacy of the department was an open secret before cell phones began capturing what was already known in these communities. Indeed, watching the callous Rodney King beating in 1992 was a turning point for a generation of Angelinos who have, at some level, witnessed or experienced the ruthlessness of the LAPD's extralegal tactics. That is why this research seeks to foreground the experiences of these communities. Central to this dissertation are the voices of people who faced such atrocities, which have often gone unpunished. To further understand why LAPD officers have rarely met any disciplinary actions, we must re-examine the policies that have been cemented and used to shield wave after wave of unruly officers. Moreover, to say violent police officers are outliers is to ignore the actual experiences of what nonwhite populations in Los Angeles endured. The "a few bad apples" argument does not hold weight to Angelinos. Like other

[1] Max Felker-Kantor, *Policing Los Angeles: Race, Resistance, and the Rise of the LAPD* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2018), 198.

Angelinos who have asked why LAPD officers rarely receive disciplinary actions for their misconduct, my research seeks to understand the policies that protected the police, the communities impacted by such policies, and the chief who implemented them leaving behind a notorious and bloody legacy.

In 1950, the LAPD underwent a process of restructuring managed by William H. Parker. Policing, as we know it today, was an idea that Parker employed to transform the police from a corrupt department to a paramilitary apparatus. A top-down centralized command was instituted, and the police union was strengthened under Parker. This restructuring departed from an archaic system of policing and entered an era when dueling political ideologies of Marxism and capitalism clashed. The tarnished image of the LAPD was replete with widespread corruption, but Parker turned a disgraced department into one that eventually embodied professionalism. Today, the LAPD's polished version of the department is what city officials like to focus on. The problem with this narrative is that this sanitized history omits the true histories of what nonwhite communities experienced. This is not an oversight by police proponents, but an attempt to control the narrative that has been branded as the official story of the LAPD.

This research has been influenced by the lived experiences of people who were flouted by the local press and city leaders. Because the lack of proper political representation ostracized these communities, I aim to lift such voices posthumously. In doing so, I trace the genealogy of current law enforcement policies to the era of William H. Parker (1950 – 1966). One example of such policies is qualified immunity which segregates policing officers from the civilian population in matters concerning punishment within the criminal legal system. A separate tier was recreated that placed police officers above the law. The danger of such policies began to influence the public perception to accept the false notion that the police should have a separate legal system than the

one that the civilian population undergoes. The problem, of course, is that this leads to a lack of accountability. It undermines the experiences of individuals who have been imperiled by a powerful institution that has been given license to commit harm without ramifications. Such reluctance allows dangerous and murderous police officers to remain on the streets, often in the same communities where they originally inflicted bodily harm.

The fear tactics instilled by the LAPD were meant to have the public not only rely on the police, but also garner their fealty. Law-abiding and criminal binaries were strategies used by men like Parker to reinforce their authority over a city that began seeing demographic shifts. If the public was kept in a constant state of fear and ignorance, then it would be less difficult to manipulate their emotions regarding how to handle alleged criminals. This was accompanied by local press outlets like the compelling forces of the *Los Angeles Times,* which was owned by wealthy, white land barons like the Chandler family. The rhetoric in these local newspapers ensured that community cooperation between the LAPD and the dominant white public would produce approval. It was a long-lasting partnership that signaled to the migrants moving into the city that their lives would not be prioritized. Together, nonwhite communities, like African Americans and people of Mexican descent, stood in direct opposition to the white establishment who had ruled Los Angeles for the better part of the last one hundred years when Parker was appointed chief of the LAPD.

By policing nonwhite communities with greater force, the LAPD, media, and white establishment created groups of people who were associated with criminality. This was a portrayal that became inescapable and situated nonwhite communities as less worthy of protection. Combining the power of the media and statistics reinforced the notion of who was considered a criminal vis-à-vis white innocence where the white community was considered to be on the right

side of the law and worth protecting. Racial meanings became powerful in social status. It was associated with the growing numbers of African Americans and people of Mexican descent moving to Los Angeles. Parker's statistical enforcement tool reveals how criminalization was guided by data and used as a basis to deploy more police officers to patrol and surveil African Americans and people of Mexican descent.

Aggregated data was a law enforcement tool used to compile biometrics and surveil the influx of migrants entering the city. The racial classifications developed by the LAPD designated who was entitled to police protection. Reviewing the total offenses compiled in the LAPD's *Annual Reports* in the Parker era shows how certain police divisions monitored nonwhite neighborhoods. African American neighborhoods consistently led most of the offenses that can be seen in the LAPD's *Annual Reports* from 1950 to 1966. During Parker's tenure, the African American population comprised, on average, ten percent of the city's population. The racial classifications not only determined how the LAPD would enforce specific laws, but also exhibited how the city was carved up into racial and ethnic enclaves that made it uncomplicated for the police to control these communities through enforced de facto racial segregation.[2]

This study uses the *Annual Reports* to demonstrate how these two specific communities – African Americans and people of Mexican descent – endured hyper-policing by the LAPD. The importance of analyzing the *Annual Reports* offers a counter-narrative in opposition to what the LAPD promulgated in the media – African Americans were "primitive," and people of Mexican descent had a proclivity toward crime because of their so-called inferior genes.[3] The data not only

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[2] Mike Davis, *City of Quartz*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), 294-5.
[3] Mina Yang, "A Thin Blue Line Down Central Avenue: The LAPD and the Demise of a musical Hub," *Black Music Research Journal* 22.2 (2002): 217-39; Ian F. Haney López, *Racism on Trial: The Fight Chicano Fight for Justice* (Cambridge & London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), 138.

unveils the imposition that the LAPD placed on these communities, but also offers a different story by examining the arrest records collected by the LAPD. Through a close examination of the *Annual Reports*, it becomes evident how certain groups were policed and racialized. The disproportionate rates of offenses cannot be refuted, especially if the reader has knowledge of the city's landscape. However, even if the reader does not have esoteric knowledge of the city's surroundings, I will provide an informational road map of how city residents were policed and forced to live in densely populated areas through surveillance strategies employed by the LAPD.

Elizabeth Hinton, Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, and Max Kelker-Kantor have all argued that the Civil Rights Movement received a right-wing backlash because of bloated police budgets. Their work has adeptly addressed the policies that shaped the infrastructure leading to an explosion of prison overcrowding. My research contributes to this discussion by reexamining how Parker criminalized African Americans and people of Mexican descent in the 1950s and 1960s. Historian Kelly Lytle Hernández has indicated that the establishment of "human caging" began as a settler colonial project to incarcerate Native Americans. Hernández expands her argument by interrogating the histories and policies that led to criminalizing rebels and undesired people, specifically aimed at nonwhite communities, unhoused workers, and leftists. Though I believe Hernández provided invaluable insight to the rise of incarceration in Los Angeles, there is a dearth of information that needs to be addressed. That is where my contribution enters. The Parker era, I argue, must be reexamined to understand the more recent policing policies that shaped the criminalization of nonwhite, leftists, and queer communities. I also believe that we must reexamine this particular era in order to understand the police violence seen repeatedly in non-white, working-class communities. Social anxieties were exploited to manipulate public opinion and to support Parker's efforts to mobilize against a fabricated social menace. By imbuing the public with fear,

nonwhite people were racialized as malcontents who needed to be surveilled, harassed, and apprehended to protect the virtue of white people. As a result, racial animus bolstered social constructions of criminality toward African Americans and people of Mexican descent. This was evident in the LAPD's *Annual Reports* when reviewing how the prison population continuously shattered records each year after Parker took over the department.[4]

Theories on Race Relations in Los Angeles

Between 1950 and 1966, Los Angeles drew migrants from the southern United States and Mexico, reshaping its cultural landscape. It was a pivotal period for the city as the Cold War had just begun. The Cold War emerged for geopolitical control and as a struggle for ideologies between Marxism in the Soviet Union and capitalism in the United States. It was weaponized to condemn communities thought to be "un-American" and as an important ideological tool used to position migrants as foreign to the ideals of American values. Such ideological assertions became social and racial markers to differentiate the influx of migrants from the dominant white and conservative population. To understand the dimensions of race associated with normative American characteristics, typically grounded in whiteness, I turn to the social construction of race as understood in *Racial Formation in the United States* by Michael Omi and Howard Winant. The cultural representations in both the African American and Mexican American communities were contrasted with whiteness in Los Angeles. The symbolic and racial meanings of whiteness were associated with being an American and conservative while the aforementioned were excluded from participating in political projects of representation in Los Angeles during the Parker era. Thus,

[4] Los Angeles Police Department, *Annual Reports* 1958, 24.

constructing the "other" was used to determined who was not white. This was seen in the city leadership and the LAPD, who were comprised of mostly conservative white males. Undoubtedly, racial politics have determined who had access to the best-paying jobs, housing, education, and police protections.[5] Indeed, such basic rights are still being fought over today. But a reexamination of this transformative period is essential to understanding why these struggles are still relevant.

It is imperative to reexamine the Parker era to understand why political and Marxist projects, like the Black Panthers for Self-Defense and the Brown Berets, were created. Both groups argued that police brutality led to the development of organizing around, confronting, and demanding an end to the police violence that plagued their communities. Moreover, a racial, ethnic, and political identity coalesced because of the hostile forces of the LAPD, which in many respects, countered the dominant narrative that these communities were dangerous. My research reexamines these critical sixteen years (1950-1966) to further understand the political turmoil instigated by the LAPD, while the political leadership remained largely silent on the misconduct and racism that was known in these communities. Racial formation is an important analytical tool to understanding the social and racial cleavages that became visible when Parker took command of one of the largest police forces in the United States. State repression brought down to the municipal level was carried out as an effective policing tool that segregated both black and brown people from whites during the post-war years. Segregation, by and large, is an instrument of white supremacy that is often overlooked in certain locations like Los Angeles.[6] Historically, racism has been reduced to the responsibility of the individual while simultaneously ignoring systemic implications. These systemic issues are reproduced when the police reinforce racial demarcations through surveillance.

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[5] Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States* (New York and London: Routledge Press, 2015), 28, 162.
[6] Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*, 162.

Thanks to disciplines such as Ethnic Studies, we are forced to confront the larger structures, and often invisible, state-sponsored repression in the criminal legal system. Specifically, the origins of the police and why police systems in the United States are a racial project predicated on white supremacy.

Analyzing how the law has favored whites is a central component to this research, but so are the experiences of nonwhite communities, especially when examining the political, social, and citizenship experiences. How these communities were policed under Parker's reign vastly differs from the white community. I build off *Racial Formation* with Cheryl Harris' "Whiteness as Property" to examine how black and brown people's lives were rendered unworthy of protection from the LAPD. Harris has indicated "Whiteness produced – and was reproduced by – the social advantage that accompanied it."[7] According to Harris, whiteness is a concept linked not only to racial identity, but also to citizenship status that is carefully protected by the legal systems in place.[8] I use this aspect of Critical Race Theory to show how people of Mexican descent were policed by the deportation regime, which included federal and local collaboration. The Naturalization Act of 1790 conferred that only white males could be citizens of the United States after living in the colonies for two years. This was then reaffirmed with *Dred Scott v. Stanford* in 1857, which ruled that African Americans could not be citizens of the United States.[9] To complicate this arbitrary notion between race and citizenship, immediately following the war between Mexico and the United States in 1848, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ruled that

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[7] Cheryl Harris, "Whiteness as Property," *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings that Formed the Movement*, ed. Kimberlé Crenshaw, Neil Gotada, Gary Peller & Kendall Thomas (New York: The New Press, 1995), 286.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Mark A. Graber, *Dred Scott and the Problem of Constitutional Evil* (Cambridge: University Press, 2006), 19.

Mexicans were lawfully American citizens. Though historically, people of Mexican descent have not been treated like white people, the United States Supreme Court stated that from an anthropological view, Mexicans were nonwhite. Yet, the court also held that the United States Congress must have thought Mexicans were white, otherwise they never would have allowed them to become citizens of the United States.[10] Moreover, the construction of whiteness is ambiguous and certainly a social construct. This is clear in how Native Americans, African American, Latinos, and Asian Americans were not "white" as defined by a series of racist laws, such as the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, *Plessy v. Ferguson 1896*, and the lesser-known Nationality Act of 1940.[11]

In addition to Harris' "Whiteness as property" theory, I employ Natalia Molina's racial scrips to compare how citizenship depended on the relationality of different groups in the United States. The complicated nature of citizenry in the United States has left legal scholars baffled with respect to its ties to race. For example, legal scholar Ian Haney López has pointed out the contradictions of race and citizenship by critically examining *Ozawa v. United States* and *United States v. Thind.* Both cases reveal that the Supreme Court could not agree on how to define whiteness but could define what was not white through "common sense" and a timeworn view that rested on Eurocentrism.[12] As such, Molina argues that people of Mexican descent have been positioned as racially inferior because of their ancestry. Such views are determined by their relationship to foreign nationals and depending on their lineage. That is to say, although Mexicans were racialized as white in 1897, they were not considered to have close kinships that derived out

[10] George A. Martinez, "Mexican Americans and Whiteness" *Critical Race Theory: The Cutting Edge,* ed. Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2013), 488-491.
[11] Ian Haney López, *White by Law: The Legal Construction of* Race (New York and London: New York University Press, 2006), 27-32.
[12] Ian Haney López, *White by Law,* 56.

of European ancestry, which resulted in a separate racial classification beginning in 1930.[13] This was significant considering that the separation of nationalities spurred the deportation regime to expel nearly half a million Mexicans from the United States during the Great Depression and later a hyperbolic one million under "Operation Wetback" in 1954.[14] The latter operation was a partnership between the LAPD and INS to forcefully repatriate people of Mexican descent irrespective of their citizenship status. As an unprotected populace, people of Mexican descent were racialized through a process of deportation spearheaded by the federal government and supported by the LAPD. Moreover, their social positions within the labor market confirmed their status as undeserving of legal protections from local and federal law enforcement agencies. Their labor power was extracted then reduced to being inconsequential. The question of citizenship and legal protections are an important feature of my research, specifically for addressing how people of Mexican descent were policed in this era. This community was framed as criminal and juxtaposed with white innocence in Los Angeles. Citizenship was ignored, but simultaneously used as a crucial component to target, detain, and deport people regardless of status.

Lisa Marie Cacho's transparent recognition is useful here. Transparent recognition shows how media discourse assigns criminality to certain races. Nonwhite people are associated with specific crimes, such as narcotics, to differentiate them from whites. It misrecognizes people as criminals, which positions white people as innocent and lawful. It is an analytic that helps to make sense of how race relations are predicated on social value like Harris' "Whiteness as Property" except that the role of the media is highlighted. Narratives reinforce stereotypes that makes it easier

[13] Natalia Molina, *How Race is Made in American: Immigration, Citizenship, and the Historical Power of Racial Scripts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 6.
[14] Ian Haney López, *White by Law*, 27-28.

for the police to criminalize people of Mexican descent and African Americans. The partnership between media and the LAPD produced a formidable force that garnered public support.

Throughout each of the following chapters, I include counter-narratives by inserting what local African American newspapers were printing during the sixteen years Parker controlled the LAPD. This was a critical departure from the dominant *Los Angeles Times*, which printed stories on how nonwhite communities and leftists were characterized as social and moral deviants. This contributed to their marginalization where these growing communities were seen as immoral and understood as foreign. As a result, people began to support Parker's policing policies to detain individuals allegedly involved in so-called deviant behavior. But equally crucial is disrupting the dominant narrative reproduced in newspapers like the *Los Angeles Times*. To further unsettle this narrative, the lived experiences of people who survived Parker's authoritarian rule are indispensable to my research. Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic argue that there is power in calling out discrimination and racism when voices are repositioned as an important element to challenging oppression and racism. By doing so, it offers the opportunity to reduce alienation by providing an alternative narrative that is regularly and historically thrusted into obscurity.[15] Highlighting the experiences of people who endured police brutality becomes a counterargument to what right-wing newspapers were disseminating during this era.

The *California Eagle* provided an alternative perspective to the *Los Angeles Times* because it wanted their community to be safe from police violence. At one point, they proposed a dialogue between the community and the police. Such pleas were ignored and accused of inciting hatred

[15] Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction* (New York: New York University Press, 2017), 52.

toward the LAPD.[16] The significance of the *California Eagle* guides my efforts at re-centering silenced voices. Counter-narratives used in Critical Race Theory will amplify the voices of the people abused by the police. I examine the stories printed in the *California Eagle* as counter-narratives that were diametrically opposed to the *Los Angeles Times* that supported Parker's violent policing methods. Newspapers, such as the *California Eagle* counters this dominant narrative that created conditions of panic by scapegoating nonwhite communities. It is an opportunity to reconcile the past by addressing the realities that many nonwhite people endured under the close watch of the LAPD.

The surveillance employed by the LAPD is just as important to understanding how nonwhite communities were policed. I use Simone Browne's *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness* to understand how the LAPD and its policing methods observed and tracked certain populations. Because these policing strategies employed stringent methods that often went unregulated by city officials, communities began to resist the violence they experienced. Browne discusses how surveillance was resisted by African Americans during their enslavement. I draw from this history and connect it to the Parker era. Indeed, some scholarship has focused on the injustices that communities experienced, which left them feeling powerless. However, just as important are histories of resistance under Parker. Police misconduct was countered by groups of people who grew tired and frustrated with the impunities that the LAPD exercised daily.

The monitoring of African Americans and people of Mexican descent created racial and political identities. Since white people did not experience the same scrutiny of surveillance, they enjoyed social privileges, becoming the city's default people worth protecting. LAPD officers

[16] W.H. Parker, "The Role in Community Relations," *The Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology, and Police Science*, Sep. – Oct., 1956, Vol. 47, No. 3 pp. 368-379.

were deployed in these communities and began racializing black and brown people by linking them to crime. The *Annual Reports* proved to be a useful law enforcement tool under the guise of public safety. Parker and the LAPD surveilled these communities because they believed that they had a biological propensity to commit more crimes than their white counterparts. Browne's theory on surveillance is used here to show how racial profiling led to resisting the LAPD's surveillance methods rooted in racism. Racial surveillance was a form of social control that the LAPD used as part of their policing strategies. It was institutionalized and eventually normalized as the *Annual Reports* were used as a justification to deploy more police officers in the nonwhite neighborhoods of Los Angeles. For Parker, the discretionary power exercised by the LAPD to monitor these communities was never questioned by city leaders. Involvements in criminal activity were not viewed as a social condition created by the police or systemic issues, but rather as a negative attribute of the communities placed under surveillance.

The Chapters: A Road Map

The first chapter discusses William Parker's ascendancy to the position of chief of the Los Angeles Police Department. I provide an analysis of his life and the structural influences that led to the reformation of the LAPD. Parker's early life provides an understanding of the policing methods that were produced and institutionalized. The local governance gave Parker unfettered power to run the department as he saw fit. A key component to understanding the department's autonomy was how he amended Section 202 of the city charter that protected his officers from the criminal legal system that they were sworn to protect and enforce. Parker was shrewd and understood the legal complexities because he was a trained lawyer who knew how to garner

support from the public. He also understood the importance of authentic depictions by taking advantage of new forms of media like television. I explore the influence he had and why today we have television shows that almost always represent police officers as an overworked institution committed to serving the public.

This first chapter focuses on the professionalization of the police. I believe it is important to interrogate this era of LAPD history as new methodologies to apprehend alleged criminals were not only instituted, but also emulated by police departments across the country. Civil rights organizations began to challenge these technological advances and aggregated data used for racial profiling. They confronted the department's abusive tactics, but Parker repositioned the LAPD as victims in a smear campaign against the police. He worked to discredit these organizations by frequently accusing them of being aligned with the former Soviet Union. It was important for Parker to control the narrative because, in his view, the LAPD was wrongly depicted as the agents of violence.

Chapter two addresses the racial tensions felt across the city. I emphasize the social construction of race through social control policies. Fascism was a real threat to the burgeoning African American community, but the police did not take the eminent danger seriously. Instead, the LAPD began to implement surveillance methods used to monitor the African American and Mexican communities. Through such methods, racial and ethnic boundaries were inscribed even as Parker publicly stated that Los Angeles did not have "Jim Crow areas" and "ghettos."[17] This chapter also shows how the LAPD bolstered a white supremacy regime by not investigating the

[17] W.H. Parker, "The Role in Community Relations," *The Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology, and Police Science*, Sep. – Oct., 1956, Vol. 47, No. 3 pp. 368-379.

racial terrorism that occurred through a series of bombings. It also examines a senseless killing by the police that brought much anger and resentment toward the department.

Though nonwhite communities undoubtedly experienced police violence and racism so did black officers. Unofficially, African American officers hardly reached prominent positions of rank. They were designated to patrol neighborhoods where white people did not live. Officially, the LAPD claimed that no officers were prevented from pursuing high-ranking positions within the department. In addition, the department set standards of how to engage with the growing African American and Mexican American communities by distributing a sociological curriculum. These training manuals were intended to foster better relations; however, the results did not reflect what the guidelines advocated for. On the surface, the LAPD appeared to be working with the community, but, they pushed to repatriate people of Mexican descent. People of Mexican descent were deported through cooperation of the LAPD and the Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS). The citizenship of people of Mexican descent was of little importance to the deportation regime, resulting in massive sweeps that separated families in Los Angeles.

Chapter three examines the Cold War Era policies set in Los Angeles. The chapter delves into the history of the notorious Red Squads and the support they received from wealthy land barons who sought to eliminate leftist movements. City ordinances attempted to register known Communists to monitor the growing Left. When Parker became chief, he was endorsed by right-wing organizations such as the John Birch Society. Right-wing organizations and Parker claimed that a Communist conspiracy guided the nascent civil rights movement as well as the federal government. The Cold War backdrop proved to be convenient for Parker as he accused these groups of being “un-American” because they demanded police accountability for their extralegal tactics. Instead, Parker decried that a fifth column was arising within the United States. An invasion

from within was portrayed as part of an internal criminal syndicate that wanted to supplant American ideals with Communism.

The fourth and final chapter explores how vices were targeted by the LAPD. The chapter builds off the previous chapters to show how Communism contributed to the early gay liberation movement. This section discusses how the leadership of Harry Hay helped to shape the Mattachine Society. Though the early gay liberation movement is not necessarily part of the city's racial "minorities," they also experienced a form of hyper-policing that I argue is important to revisit. The city's stance on immorality is important enough to examine, specifically as the city leaders positioned themselves as a moral authority over so-called immoral behavior. I also review the moral offensive led by city officials and how they tasked Parker's LAPD to arrest alleged "sexual perverts."

As the chapter unfolds, the moral offensive was redirected at people of Mexican descent and African Americans in the city's early drug wars. The LAPD's *Annual Reports* uncover that people of Mexican descent and African Americans were targeted more than their white counterparts. Furthermore, they show how certain districts were policed in relation to the white neighborhoods of Los Angeles. The chapter will unpack the racial components in drug offenses and how they were mostly found in the Central Avenue Division. Areas that were heavily policed are vital to this research. The Central Avenue region provided plentiful opportunities for African Americans through entrepreneurism, homeownership, and wealth. Because the city was governed through racial segregation, the LAPD disrupted opportunities for African Americans, particularly as white celebrities ventured down the strip at well-known integrated nightclubs. People who experienced hyper-policing in this district, mainly jazz musicians, discuss how the LAPD's racist regime kept the area segregated.

Language

In focusing on the deportation strategies employed by the LAPD and the federal government, I use terminologies that encompass the experiences of people with Mexican ancestry. Thus, I conform to using "people of Mexican descent." On the rare occasion, I will employ "Mexican American" or "Mexican," but will mostly rely on "people of Mexican descent." I believe it is imperative to include everyone with Mexican heritage as they were policed as a separate class from whites. Moreover, my research focuses on this specific Latina/o/x population because little evidence surfaced on people of other Latin American nationalities. However, that is not to say that no other Latina/o/x people called Los Angeles their home. The LAPD's *Annual Reports* did not make distinctions and used the term "LATINS" to reorganize Latina/o/x people into one group. The evidence suggests that they were disproportionately targeted in comparison to whites.

I use African American and black interchangeably. There is no reason except to provide a space for preference. I want to honor preference of language in my research. The point is to include the African American or black experience in my research and to compare them to people of Mexican descent. The lexicon is used in a variety of ways to describe people's social location, but just as important is how they were surveilled by the LAPD. Language is an important feature in this research, particularly the way it was used by Parker and the LAPD to racially classify the influx of migrants entering the city. In certain sections of this research, the word "negro" appears to describe how the LAPD labeled African Americans and black people. This will be further explored in my research.

To cover the experiences of both African Americans and people of Mexican descent, I employ "nonwhite." Occasionally, "people of color" will be used, however, I rely mostly on "nonwhite" or "nonwhite communities." Indeed, more and more scholars are using black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) in their scholarship. Because my research mostly focuses on African Americans and people of Mexican descent, I conform to "nonwhite" to speak of their experiences in relation to the LAPD.

Toward the end of this study, I examine the queer community. However, the terms "queer" or LGBTQ+ were not actively used to identify sexual orientation during the era I examine. Terms such as "gay" had not been widely employed at this time. Rather, I use "homosexual" and "gay" to describe the sexual identity of the population I examine. The reader will find that a proper term had not been evoked to describe non-heterosexual relations. "Homosexual" is a way to describe same-gender romantic or sexual relations, but more and more men began to defer to "gay" to describe their sexual identity when Harry Hay led the liberation movement. I want to honor that request. However, when the LAPD arrested these men for engaging in sexual acts, they were classified as "sexual perverts" in the *Annual Reports*. I believe that the slur was intended to induce moral panics. Such panics were linked to immoral behaviors that were premised on heteronormativity. By including their experiences, my goal is to show how this community also resisted hyper-policing.

Moreover, when I was researching specific keywords, such as "Central Avenue," "police misconduct," "jazz," and "homosexual" in the database of Pro Quest, these terms were mostly absent in the *Los Angeles Times*. Rather, when searching terms associated with the Cold War and Red Scare, a plethora of articles appeared. This made it easier for me to examine the Red Scare chapter. I use the word "leftists" to describe the people who challenged the conservative and right-

wing ideology that loomed largely over Los Angeles during this period. Not all leftists were part of the Communist Party, but they did share similar goals to combat police misconduct and defend marginalized people's constitutional rights.

Over the course of the sixteen years that I examine in this project, different groups experienced various methods of police brutality. Some were fortunate enough to have escaped with their lives while others were murdered by the LAPD. Social justice guides this research to hold William Parker and the LAPD accountable for their vicious actions. The legacy of the LAPD is replete with violence that has been accepted to "protect" the public. Such assertions normalize the ruthlessness that is endemic to the LAPD. By reexamining the Parker era, I hope readers will grapple with the origins of our current police system that operates with impunity. Those who have an interest in state-sponsored violence will find this body of work critical to understanding the historical and structural forces that continue to permeate our lives and the complicit nature of the criminal legal system that ignores our demands to end police brutality.

Chapter Two:

"The Power and Influence of William H. Parker"

On August 2, 1950, the Los Angeles city commission appointed William H. Parker chief of the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) in a 4 – 0 vote.[18] Parker held this position until he suffered a heart attack in 1966. During these sixteen years, Parker overhauled the department, known for corruption, into a model of police professionalism. He is credited with professionalizing law enforcement by implementing police science as a burgeoning law enforcement tool, amending Section 202 of the city charter– an early form of qualified immunity – and used the television show *Dragnet* to promote an authentic representation of police officers. During his tenure, Parker restructured the core foundations of modern-day policing by introducing higher salaries and the use of aggregated data to "fight" crime. He transformed the LAPD into a professional career option for white men. This change was incredibly significant as the LAPD would be emulated by a variety of police departments across the United States, including New York and Philadelphia.[19] Today, law enforcement officials remember Parker as a visionary who shaped policing methods, a tough but shrewd policymaker who wielded power over a decentralized municipal council, and a man who often got what he demanded.[20] However, Parker was also viewed as a racist and chauvinist tormenter by Angelino African Americans and people of Mexican descent. Though these nonwhite

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[18] LAPD History. Accessed September 9, 2020. https://www.lapdhistory.net/chief-william-h-parker/.

[19] George M. O'Connor, "The Negro and the Police in Los Angeles" (Master's thesis, University of Southern California, 1955), 128, https://www-proquest-com.colorado.idm.oclc.org/docview/1647273937?pq-origsite=summon (January 8, 2021).

[20] Alisa Sarah Kramer, "William H. Parker and the Thin Blue Line: Politics, Public Relations, and Policing in Postwar Los Angeles" (PhD Diss., American University, 2007), ProQuest Dissertations & Thesis.

communities endured police violence during his sixteen-year tenure, the department's current website portrays Parker as a broadminded leader posing with young African American police recruits. This portrayal situated Parker and the LAPD as an institution that provided career opportunities for everyone, regardless of their race or ethnicity. It is an attempt to sanitize Parker's image, one that was fraught with racism, violence, and remnants of de facto racial segregation.[21]

Racism and violence were part and parcel during Parker's leadership. During his tenure, an LAPD station hung a picture on the wall of former First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt, with the words "nigger lover" scratched across her face.[22] No officers were ever reprimanded for this act of bigotry, which reflected Parker's leadership. Examples such as this were endemic to Parker's LAPD culture. Rather than attempting to redress the racism that was ubiquitous to the culture of the LAPD, both city and department officials ignored racist acts and framed Parker as a visionary who worked tirelessly to eliminate corruption. Other examples include police officers providing protection for a sex worker ring with connections to organized crime, which went against his principles as a Catholic.[23] City officials and the LAPD glossed over racism and sexism as boys being boys and made a conscious effort to credit Parker for professionalizing policing as a social institution that catapulted many into the middle-class.[24] Though professionalizing the police is accurate, what is omitted from the discourse is that his police officers, mainly young white males, bolstered the deep racial divide in the city. Many white officers were deployed to patrol the city's

[21] Mike Davis, *City of Quartz*, 293.
[22] Ian F. Haney Lopez, *Racism on Trial*, 137.
[23] David Shaw, *Los Angeles Times*, May 25, 1992.
[24] James Woods, "The Progressives and Police: Urban Reform and the Professionalization of the Los Angeles Police" (PhD Diss., University of California, Los Angeles 1973), accessed January 18, 2021, ProQuest Dissertations & Thesis, 425.

up-and-coming African American neighborhoods, resembling an occupying army.[25] Yet, it was Parker's vision to remake the LAPD's image that is often centered when discussing police professionalism. Today, the Los Angeles Police Department's central headquarters is named after him – Parker Center – while ostensibly ignoring the criminalization of communities during his sixteen-year tenure. One of Parker's accomplishments was professionalizing the LAPD, but under his leadership, he worked to consolidate his power over both the department and city.[26] To understand the nature of the LAPD, the chapter critically reexamines the culture of the department. We cannot understand the personality of the LAPD without first learning of Parker's ascendency – how he professionalized the department, used police science to supposedly deter crime, protected violent police officers, employed the influence of the media, and created an intelligence division to surveil his political opponents.

Early Life

William H. Parker was born on June 21, 1902, and raised in Deadwood, South Dakota. His high school yearbook described him as a talented athlete and a gifted orator. Parker's report card reflected his intelligence as his high school principal spoke of his aptitude for math and rhetoric – skills that would eventually become useful in his law enforcement career.[27] Parker was influenced by his grandfather, William Henry Parker II, who encouraged him to pursue a career in law

[25] Martin J. Schiesl, 1990, "Behind the Badge: The Police and Social Discontent in Los Angeles Since 1950," in *20TH Century Los Angeles: Power, Promotion, and Social Conflict* (Claremont: Regina Books), 158.
[26] Joe Domanick, *To Protect and to Serve: The LAPD's Century of War in the City of Dreams (*New York: Pocket Books, 1994), 167.
[27] John Buntin, *L.A. Noir: The Struggle for the Soul of America's Most Seductive City* (New York: Broadway Books, 2009), 15.

enforcement. His grandfather served in the Union Army during the civil war and was discharged in 1866.[28] Throughout his life, Parker II was a frontier law enforcement officer, a United States Attorney for the state of Colorado, and eventually a member of the House of Representatives.[29] As a teen, the young Parker worked as a hotel detective expelling sex workers from the Deadwood establishments. He worked at the Franklin Hotel where high-stakes poker games were usually played. Yet, what is typically absent from his profile is that he likely did not interfere in the games.[30] Otherwise, the tough-guy persona written into LAPD history would compromise the legend. His first marriage failed because he was a controlling husband. In 1924, when his first wife attempted to leave him, Parker struck, choked, and dragged her back into their apartment.[31] Parker was a drunk and to rely on his personal chauffeur to drive him around Los Angeles.[32] He would later exhibit his temperament in public, especially when he was forced to defend the department's widespread abuses.

Parker eventually relocated to Los Angeles in his twenties and joined the department on August 8, 1927. While working as a taxi driver, he enrolled in night courses at Los Angeles College of Law in 1930.[33] Though he passed the state bar, Parker eventually chose to pursue a career in law enforcement.[34] The Stock Market Crash of 1929 deterred Parker's career choice, affirming his decision to become a police officer rather than practicing law.[35] Being a police officer offered

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[28] Bob Taylor "Reflections – Chief William H. Parker" *The Hot Sheet* Publication of the Los Angeles Police Museum, April – May 2016, No. 72.
[29] Alisa Sarah Kramer, "William H. Parker and the Thin Blue Line," 12.
[30] John Buntin, *L.A. Noir*, 15.
[31] Ibid., 20.
[32] Mike Davis and Jon Wiener, *Set the Night on Fire: L.A. in the Sixties, (*London and New York: Verso Books, 2020), 41.
[33] O.W. Wilson, *Parker on Police* (Springfield: Charles C. Thomas Publisher, 1957), 11.
[34] Karl Detzer, "Dragnet in Real Life," *National Civic Review*, (September, 1959), 403-407.
[35] Jack Webb, *The Badge*, (New York: MJF Books, 1958), 246.

financial security. He became Acting Sergeant before 1930, a position that became permanent in 1931. In 1934, Parker was promoted again to Acting Lieutenant.[36] One of his major accomplishments was rewriting the charter amendment Section 202. Beginning in 1934, police officers were effectively shielded from public scrutiny and disciplinary actions unless it was doled out internally. Section 202 ensured that a board of rights, comprised of high-ranking police officers, could only punish officers accused of police misconduct, such as alleged shootings and beatings. These high-ranking officers held exclusive jurisdiction over all disciplinary actions.[37] This charter amendment would have future and long-lasting implications that protected the position of the police chief. In addition, Parker served as the department's prosecutor for trial proceedings and three years later he became a Special Assistant to Chief James Davis. His final position before becoming the chief was the head inspector of the traffic division in 1947.

Before Parker deployed for Europe for two years during World War II, he attained the rank of captain.[38] While he served in occupied Italy and Germany, Parker developed the Police and Prisons Plan for the European Invasion. Moreover, he created a democratic police system for Munich and Frankfurt police stations, which established an American approach to policing.[39] The LAPD has idolized him as a man who personified hyper-masculinity and intelligence. He was considered honorable by his peers because he was incorruptible.[40] Parker was described as a man with conviction who faithfully supported his officers and believed that no one was above the law.[41] The 1958 publication of *The Badge* written by the creator and actor of the television program

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[36] James Woods, "Progressives and Police," 420.
[37] Mike Davis and Jon Wiener, *Set the Night on Fire,* 44.
[38] Martin J. Schiesl, 1990, "Behind the Badge," 154.
[39] O.W. Wilson, *Parker on Police,* 8.
[40] LAPD History. Accessed September 9, 2020. https://www.lapdhistory.net/chief-william-h-parker/.
[41] Ibid.

Dragnet, Jack Webb, portrayed Parker as a victim who endured constant verbal harassment by "politician, minority spokesmen, and civil liberties defenders."[42] By combining his faith, patriotism, and the conservative perception of social order, Parker advocated for an ideology of "Americanism."[43] For Parker, the war that he left behind in Europe continued on the streets of Los Angeles as people who challenged his authority became his enemies.

These positions allowed Parker to gain the experience he needed to head the LAPD. As soon as he was appointed chief of the department, Parker began implementing a brand of policing that stemmed from his time spent as the department's prosecutor and assistant to Davis. Most notable, was how the LAPD mirrored a paramilitary structure.[44] Parker spent twenty-three years in the department, which gave him an understanding of how the city functioned, particularly in the political sphere.[45] Because the LAPD was riddled with corruption scandals from grift to strong-arm briberies before his confirmation as chief, this incentivized Parker to steer clear of any wrongdoings that could have thwarted his rise to chief of police. As a result, his authority was legitimized as a leader guided by ethics.[46]

As a devout Catholic, Parker was guided by a moral sense that people who fall outside the scope of piety and patriotism were un-American and Godless Communists. He helped other police officers who shared his faith. According to LAPD historian James Woods, Parker aided other Catholic police officers. For Parker, Catholic officers had no excuse for participating in immoral

[42] Jack Webb, *The Badge*, 242.
[43] James Woods, "Progressives and Police," 422.
[44] Ibid., 429.
[45] Ibid., 417.
[46] Joe Domanick, *To Protect and to Serve*, 78.

behaviors because of their faith.[47] He felt that the role of the police was a higher calling from God and that his officers needed to conduct themselves accordingly.

In 1956, while serving as the chief, Parker was allowed to practice law before the United States Supreme Court.[48] However, there is no record of Parker arguing before the court. In addition to his law degree, he received numerous accolades from U.S. allies overseas, including a Purple Heart during the Normandy Invasion, the Croix de Guerre with Silver Star by France, and Star of Solidarity for restoring a government in Sardinia, Italy. He was also awarded Honorary Chief of the National Police by the South Korean government in 1952.[49] By the time he died of a heart attack, Parker was referred to as "America's best-known policeman."[50]

Conservatives framed Parker as a tough, but impartial police chief. A towering figure in the history of not only Los Angeles, Parker imbued professionalism and a source of respectability from police officers across the United States. He is credited for ensuring policemen could earn higher salaries akin to doctors and lawyers. Despite this, he was also a polarizing figure who enforced the racial demarcations that emerged from an influx of migrants – people of Mexican descent and African Americans relocating to Los Angeles. All the accolades he was awarded cannot conceal how his policing methods criminalized nonwhite communities during his sixteen years as chief. He refused to acknowledge that police brutality existed in the LAPD. His reputation as a leader who rebranded the LAPD into a professional institution has been tarnished by his disparaging comments on race relations and inactions to hold accountable police officers who often used violence to target Mexican and African American communities. Opposing "racial pressures"

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[47] James Woods, "Progressives and Police," 421.
[48] O.W. Wilson, *Parker on Police*, xi.
[49] Ibid., viii.
[50] James Woods, "Progressives and Police," 417.

made him a hero to some and a rogue leader to others.[51] Indeed, there are two diverging narratives regarding Parker as the chief of the LAPD – one in which Parker is extolled by his fellow law enforcement officers while the other is a counter-narrative that speaks to the injustices committed by the LAPD under his watch. I focus on the latter and give voice to the historically marginalized because providing counter-narratives is crucial to understanding how Parker's policies had ripple effects in the subsequent decades.

Critical Race Theorist Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic describe counter-storytelling as writing that doubts the validity of the hegemonic narrative that often is accepted as truth. The dominant narrative functions to cast doubt over the people who have been subjected to systematic oppression. When society begins to accept the discourse promulgated by white-dominated institutions, such as the police, people will be painted as criminals unless otherwise challenged. These populations are silenced and rarely can give their side of the story. Such silencing places the burden of proof on either the individual or population who has been situated as a criminal.[52] However, counter-stories challenge such assertions by disrupting this discourse.

The city changed drastically by the time Parker died. From the year that Parker joined the LAPD in 1927 to his death in 1966, the black and brown population of Los Angeles grew by 30%. Moreover, during Parker's time as chief, the LAPD's budget increased from $21.5 million to $81 million.[53] Immediately following World War II, people relocated to various regions of the United States.[54] People of Mexican descent and African Americans were looking for new beginnings and Los Angeles was one of the cities where people began to establish roots. In the early twentieth

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[51] Jack Webb, *The Badge*, 243.
[52] Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, *Critical Race Theory*, 50.
[53] James Woods, "Progressives and Police," 436.
[54] Donna Jean Murch, *Living for the City: Migration, Education, and the Rise of the Black Panthers Party in Oakland, California* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 15.

century, Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois proclaimed that Southern California offered "opportunities" and "possibilities" for African Americans.[55] Between 1940 to 1970, more than four million African Americans fled the Jim Crow south.[56] Los Angeles provided job opportunities for many. In the years that Parker managed the LAPD, 800,000 new residents either fled racial terrorism in the south or migrated from Mexico.[57] Parker and the influx of migrants entering the city were on a collision course that would end an uprising that left the city burning from mounting frustration and a refusal to discipline violent officers.

Professionalizing the LAPD

Parker transformed the LAPD from a local disgrace replete with scandals to the best professionally trained police force in the United States. He has been lauded for increasing police officer salaries, instituting a paramilitary apparatus, and installing a corruption-free police department. His authoritarian rule emphasized military analogies such as "police science" derived from criminologist August Vollmer.[58] Restructuring the LAPD into a bureaucratic institution by reducing the executive positions of power only worked in his favor. His authority became supreme and had subordinates directly reporting to him. Parker believed in utilizing the bureaucratic structure to improve his goals with three tasks: analyzing a policeman's workload with efficiency, developing a comprehensive system for training manuals, and reducing cost and time. The manuals

[55] Lonnie G. Bunch, "A Past Not Necessarily Prologue: The Afro-American in Los Angeles, *20th Century Los Angeles: Power, Promotion, and Social Conflict*, (Claremont: Regina Books, 1990), 101.
[56] Ibid., 107.
[57] James Woods, "Progressives and Police," 428.
[58] Ibid., 429.

created under his leadership would become the national standard for police training.[59] This changed the way police officers were trained in cities across the United States and created social chasms between the police and civilians.

When Parker was appointed, the LAPD radically changed into a quasi-military centralized bureaucracy. The newly transformed department was unleashed onto the streets of Los Angeles as a tightly structured paramilitary apparatus that resembled an occupying battalion targeting individuals who appeared "suspicious." Such early forms of illegal stops and warrantless searches were used by the LAPD. This system of surveillance is traceable to at least one hundred years during the enslavement. As Simone Browne notes, the early surveillance systems were part of the racial monitoring that grew under the slave patrols that institutionalized a system of violence. Organized slave patrols tracked the enslaved people who attempted to escape. The restriction of movement was an example of how the LAPD's power was exerted over a defenseless population.[60]

As the LAPD reemerged as an ostensibly corrupt-free police department under Parker, racism persisted. Parker's infamous quote, "Los Angeles is the white spot of the great cities of America today" has been analyzed, but the following is often omitted in scholarship, "It is to the advantage of the community that we keep it that way." If the city were to maintain its white power structure, then Parker worked fiercely to prevent African Americans from joining the department's leadership roles. Throughout the fifties, Parker made every effort to hinder black officers from entering high-ranking positions of power, including future Mayor Tom Bradley. When black-owned newspapers, like the *Los Angeles Sentinel*, printed stories of police brutality, Parker accused

[59] James Woods, "Progressives and Police," 427.
[60] Simone Browne, *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2015), 52-53.

Bradley of leaking information to dissident organizations without providing evidence.[61] On the surface, it appeared that the LAPD was initiating structural changes from within. The reforms that Parker instituted have been revered as a turning point in police history.[62] Yet, the racism that permeated the LAPD forced Parker to address his department's bigotry. As such, Parker tapped one of his subordinates to develop a section of the recruitment curriculum to teach officers the importance of so-called "minority relations."[63] It became an important feature of the reforms that Parker introduced, but it never materialized as a successful program in his sixteen-year tenure.

In 1952, Parker assigned Inspector Noel McQuown to develop a curriculum for the recruits entering the police academy. The training reforms launched by the LAPD became the model that many cities like New York and Philadelphia emulated. The reforms addressed community race relations between the LAPD and African Americans and people of Mexican descent. Topics included "minority relations" to train officers on the sociological aspects of policing in nonwhite communities.[64] Recruits underwent ten hours of training, which the LAPD at the time thought was sufficient. Before Parker was appointed as chief, community leaders demanded that the LAPD improve their tumultuous relationship with nonwhite people. Parker's predecessor, William Worton, promised to implement social reforms, but they never came to fruition. The 1952 program was celebrated as a major accomplishment because no complaints of police harassment were reported between 1953 and 1954.[65]

During this period, police departments in California saw the need to create a community partnership between themselves and African Americans. Officers were encouraged to improve

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[61] Joe Domanick, *To Protect and to Serve*, 163.
[62] O.W. Wilson, *Parker on Police*, 11.
[63] George M. O'Connor, "The Negro and the Police in Los Angeles," 126.
[64] Ibid., 207.
[65] Ibid., 127.

their relationship with the people they were expected to protect by learning state, municipal, and civil rights laws. Moreover, officers were told that they needed to understand "the psychology of minority group behavior and attitudes" to prevent racial conflict. Yet, with all these training initiatives, police violence never decreased. At the same time, the LAPD's "minority relations" training model was well received around the country by other police departments.[66] Though the idea was to avoid violence by educating officers in understanding the conflict that nonwhites experienced, the reality was that the training did nothing to ease the racial tension that saturated the city. But the program was touted as cutting-edge reforms that would provide solutions to the precarious relationship between the LAPD and communities of color.

In 1954, the chairman of the law enforcement committee, Milton Senn, representing the LAPD, attended the First National Police-Community Relations Conference in Philadelphia. While attending, over eighty policy-making officials representing twenty-seven cities on the east coast expressed interest in implementing the same training procedures and programs used by the LAPD.[67] A New York Police Commissioner from the conference stated that eastern city police departments did not have the scope and extensive training in race relations as the LAPD did.[68] While the LAPD became the envy of the east coast departments in the early 1950s, white police officers who were being recruited from the southern states were unaware of the racial and cultural differences in Los Angeles. For example, new white recruits could not comprehend the social issues that frustrated African Americans and people of Mexican descent. [69] In particular, the police

[66] George M. O'Connor, "The Negro and the Police in Los Angeles," 208.
[67] Ibid., 128.
[68] Ibid., 129.
[69] Ibid., 88, 124.

violence that occurred in these communities repeatedly went unpunished, diminishing the hope that reforms would produce fundamental changes.[70]

Recruitment standards were altered during Parker's tenure. When Parker was appointed chief of the LAPD in 1950, the total salaries for officers were $17,727,656.81.[71] By the end of the decade, salaries had almost doubled to $32,294,677.01.[72] In 1956, the LAPD had the highest paid salaries for police officers in the United States. A monthly salary for a police officer at the time was $489.[73] Adjusted for inflation, today the salary would equate to $4,810 per month. He increased the number of recruits by eliminating police reserves and other unpaid positions, believing physical appearance was important. The standards changed based on age, height, and intelligence. This image of a fit police officer was personified through Jack Webb's television program *Dragnet* where the characters' professional manner of neatly dressed, intelligent, and physically fit was viewed weekly.[74] Derived from the pseudoscience movement of Eugenics, Parker's conception of "fit" promoted the development of physical and mental well-being of so-called good stock that police officers needed to be part of the LAPD. Recruits were usually young and straight out of high school or with military experience. They had to stand at least five feet nine inches tall and white.[75] Parker explained, "Our recruitment processes are perhaps the most exacting in the entire police field. The successful candidates are assigned to the police academy where they are subjected to a rigid course of training of three months' duration."[76] In the early twentieth

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[70] "The Road to Understanding," *California Eagle*, May 17, 1962.
[71] Mina Yang, "A Thin Blue Line Down Central Avenue," 217-239.
[72] Los Angeles Police Department, *Annual Reports*, 1960, 32.
[73] William H. Parker, "The Police Role in Community Relations," *The Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology, and Police Science,* Sep. Oct. 1956 Vol, 47, No. 3. 368-379.
[74] James Woods, "Progressives and Police" 429.
[75] Ibid. 428.
[76] O.W. Wilson, *Parker on Police*, 25.

century, ideas of race biology were beginning to wane after being challenged, but its remnants were apparent in Parker's recruitment standards. Omi and Winant note that race scholars, such as Du Bois criticized the biological race theories promulgated by Eugenicists. He disputed racial biology theories by challenging the notion that differences among races were reduced to cultural terms. The issue here was not that race scholars casted doubt over race biology, but that conceptions of race rooted in cultural differences remained in the mainstream for whites, including influential leaders like Chief Parker.[77] This circumvented overt racism that was previously used to separate races – intelligence and physical characteristics. Indeed, race is a conception derived from "social thought." Social thought is an arbitrary notion, but so are cultural differences.[78] There is no basis for cultural differences except that it is purely made up and has consequences when it comes to stereotyping people. The way social relationships are developed and policed is what is important here, especially when we examine how communities of color were linked to crime in the 1950s.

Police Science and the Culture of the LAPD

Many of Parker's policing strategies can be traced to criminologist and Berkeley Police Chief August Vollmer. In the early twentieth century, Vollmer formalized a set of training principles made for police academies. He emphasized creating a centralized leadership role of a police chief within local law enforcement departments while also introducing innovative scientific methods to investigate crime scenes with specialized divisions. In 1923, Vollmer headed the LAPD

[77] Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*, 28, 117.
[78] Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, *Critical Race Theory*, 9.

for one-year, but there is scant evidence that the technological advances he advocated for were applied during his brief tenure. Moreover, during Vollmer's duration as chief, he was unable to eliminate the corruption that afflicted the LAPD.[79] Though specialty units were replacing outdated policing techniques, many local police departments did not push to implement these new technological advancements as much as Parker did when he was appointed. The reforms that Vollmer promoted were mainly implemented by Parker beginning in the early 1950s. Despite this, one such issue that was not taken up during Parker's tenure was the idea of community policing.[80]

Parker instituted reforms that represented a new system of police professionalism in the post-war years, but establishing community cooperation was not one of them. The difference between Vollmer and Parker's reforms is that the former believed the police should be part of the community in matters concerning social welfare. The latter did not share Vollmer's vision that police should have social work training, but Parker did believe that teenage drug abuse should be a responsibility of both the community and police.[81] Vollmer argued that social services needed to be an integral part of policing. He was a product of the Progressive Era that believed in reforms and activism as part of promoting community cooperation. For instance, local police departments needed to be part of the welfare state to help people who suffered from mental illness.[82] Vollmer believed that criminal behavior could be eliminated by instituting higher wages for working adults and to provide educational opportunities for school-aged children. Furthermore, Vollmer argued that being vigilant of anti-social behavior in children would deter criminal activity in adulthood by

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[79] James Woods, "Progressives and Police," 163 – 4.
[80] Alisa Sarah Kramer, "William H. Parker and the Thin Blue Line: Politics, Public Relations, and Policing in Postwar Los Angeles," 5.
[81] William H. Parker, "Youth and Narcotics: A Study of Juvenile Drug Addiction in Los Angeles," *Los Angeles Police Department*, 1952, 1 – 8.
[82] William H. Parker, "Youth and Narcotics," 5.

correcting deviant behavior early in life. In essence, he believed that society needed to play a significant role in creating opportunities for all. An interesting notion considering that these reforms could still be found among today's social activists who argue for defunding the police to reallocate monetary resources back into the community.

While racism was endemic to the culture of policing in the mid-century, the LAPD was no different. The Los Angeles branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) received numerous complaints against the LAPD for the violence they inflicted on African American residents. According to the NAACP, after the LAPD beat an alleged suspect, they would book the individual on false charges ranging from resisting arrest to drunkenness.[83] In addition to the NAACP, the local American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) chapter raised concerns of police violence and harassment. Violent LAPD officers had the full support of Parker and were seldom disciplined for their extralegal tactics.[84] When organizations such as the NAACP and ACLU sought justice for people who experienced police brutality, they were dismissed as Communist agitators. Parker went as far as to declare that social justice organizations were controlled by leaders of the former Soviet Union. In an incredulous declaration, Parker believed that such organizations somehow caused his officers to doubt themselves, sowing the seeds of uncertainty on how to conduct themselves when interacting with nonwhite community members. In 1957, he wrote, "This is a situation long sought by the Masters in the Kremlin. The bloody revolution, long the dream of the Comintern, cannot be accomplished in the face of a resolute

[83] Martin J. Schiesl, "Behind the Badge," 156.
[84] Ibid.

police."[85] What is more, complaints of police brutality brought against his officers did not assuage concerns among residents nor did he bother to validate their experiences.

In 1952, the LAPD murdered thirteen civilians. Seven of those killed were African Americans. The lieutenant governor of California in 1953, Ellis Patterson, stated that police violence in Los Angeles was caused by "trigger-happy" police officers.[86] One such example of a killing was that of a seventy-two-year-old African American named James Scruggs. Mr. Scruggs was murdered by the LAPD early in the morning of November 28, 1952. Plain clothed policemen waited to serve an arrest warrant on a misdemeanor charge to Scruggs' stepson, Jefferson Adams, at 2:15 a.m. The LAPD officers kicked down the backdoor unannounced and forced their way into the home. Scruggs believed that the men who were breaking in were burglars. He grabbed his shotgun to defend his family's home when the police responded by shooting him four times and killing him in the process. The coroner's report ruled the murder a "justifiable homicide."[87]

The community was outraged by Scruggs' murder. They felt that this senseless death could have been avoided by exercising common sense.[88] Moreover, their anger was certainly not orchestrated by a small group of men in the politburo[89] back in the Soviet Union. It was not only these deaths that angered the African American and Mexican American communities. As early as 1951, an alarming number of cases had been reported to the NAACP's Los Angeles chapter.[90] Even more disturbing was the way the LAPD worked in concert with the district attorney's office

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[85] William H. Parker, "The California Crime Rise," *The Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology, and Police Science,* Vol. 47, No. 6 (Mar. – Apr., 1957), 721 – 729.
[86] George M. O'Connor, "The Negro and the Police in Los Angeles," 131.
[87] Ibid., 132.
[88] Ibid.
[89] A senior committee or governing council within Communist Parties that makes centralized decisions. Members are typically appointed.
[90] George M. O'Connor, "The Negro and the Police in Los Angeles," 136.

to protect violent officers. Collusion occurred between the LAPD and the district attorney's office when they needed to convict an individual who accused the LAPD of police brutality. It was a tactic used by the district attorney to shield police officers from receiving discipline. In other words, the city attorney's office would investigate the person who accused the LAPD of brutality instead. If the charge received attention, their office, at the very least, attempted to frighten accusers out of filing a civil lawsuit.[91]

Throughout his tenure, Parker would often position his officers as victims of unwarranted criticisms. In a progress report submitted to the Board of Police Commissioners in 1953, Parker stated, "Too often it is the vogue to attack the police upon the slightest provocation, blaming them for the ills of society."[92] To combat allegations made against his department an administrative division was created to investigate complaints filed by the civilian population. The division received an average of 905 complaints while only a quarter resulted in disciplinary results. He went on to say, "The citizen evaluating these figures must recognize that the life of the policeman is severely regulated compared to that of the private citizen," in the same breath, "total offenses involving dishonesty, abuse of civil rights, or excessive force, averaged only .004 percent of department strength during 1951 and 1952."[93] He argued that the LAPD did not have violent police officers. Rather, his officers were depicted as deeply devoted to the ideals of democratic and ethical principles. For Parker, the LAPD officers were frontline soldiers taking on an army of criminals who wanted to beset the city. Nonetheless, many nonwhites held Parker responsible for high levels of police misconduct regardless of his depictions of the police as defenders against an imaginary crime wave.

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[91] George M. O'Connor, "The Negro and the Police in Los Angeles," 137.
[92] Ibid., 213.
[93] O.W. Wilson, *Parker on Police*, 208.

The social and racial divide was apparent by the way the LAPD conducted its policing affairs toward communities of color. Parker instituted this rift by going after any organizations or persons who called on accountability. Civil rights issues were ignored by Parker because race played a central role in who was able to exercise them. As Harris points out, "Rights were for those who had the capacity to exercise them, a capacity denoted by racial identity. The conception of rights was contingent on race, on whether once could claim whiteness – a form of property."[94] The so-called ethics and principles that the LAPD purported to espouse were nonexistent and delegitimized the concerns of the community. The simmering anger among nonwhite communities found its way in creating coalitions to confront the mounting police violence that many saw as alarming.

The people were angered by Parker's dismissals. The Los Angeles County on Community Relations, a coalition of various ethnicities, religions, and civic associations, confronted Parker. When it came to complaints against police officers, the coalition recommended that the position of a police commissioner be created at every precinct. Moreover, the coalition wanted to establish police-citizen review boards in nonwhite neighborhoods to ensure that officers were held responsible for their transgressions. The coalition wanted police officers who patrolled these areas to go under some form of racial training to have better community relations.[95] The "minority relations" training curriculum that the LAPD used in the academy was not yielding positive results. While community leaders believed hiring more nonwhite officers would build bridges between the LAPD and these communities, Parker did not share this sentiment. He believed that officer's

[94] Cheryl Harris, "Whiteness as Property,"286.
[95] Martin J. Schiesl, "Behind the Badge," 157.

"competency" carried more weight than their "ancestry" when it came to patrolling such neighborhoods.[96]

The Effects of Charter Amendment Section 202

Before he was appointed chief of police, Parker commanded the Bureau of Internal Affairs Division (IAD). It was here that he was tasked with investigating allegations of departmental misconduct. The problem with IAD was that it shielded violent LAPD officers from being charged with serious crimes.[97] As chief, he was also protected from being held liable for allegations of misconduct himself – a position that he helped create in the 1930s when he was still a lieutenant.

One of the more infamous cases of police brutality, which occurred on Christmas in 1951, reveals the turbulent relationship that the LAPD had with people of Mexican descent. Known as "Bloody Christmas," seven men, five of whom were of Mexican descent, were beaten by scores of inebriated LAPD officers who were having a party at the Central Avenue Station. The incident began when drunk officers at a Christmas party believed a rumor that one of their colleagues had lost an eye after an altercation with the men who had just been placed in custody. The officers descended to the holding tank where they dragged the prisoners from their cells and proceeded to "batter, knee, and kick the prisoners" into submission.[98]

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[96] William H. Parker, "The Police Role in Community Relations," 368-379.
[97] Edward Escobar, "Bloody Christmas and the Irony of Police Professionalism: The Los Angeles Police Department, Mexican Americans, and Police Reform in the 1950s," *The Pacific Historical Review,* Vol. 72, No. 2 (May, 2003), 171 - 199.
[98] Ibid.

At the time of the incident, Parker was the head of the LAPD for a little over a year. Recall, city charter Section 202 protected police officers accused of any wrongdoings.[99] The policy stipulated that police officers could not be fired or disciplined without due process from an internal review system. An important feature of the code stated:

> No tenured officer of the Department shall be suspended, demoted in rank, and removed, or otherwise separated from the service of the Department (other than by resignation), except for good and sufficient cause shown upon a finding of "guilty" of the specific charge or charges assigned as cause or causes therefore after a full, fair, and impartial hearing before a Board of Rights, except as otherwise specifically provided in Subsections (3) and (8).[100]

The policy was designed to protect officers from the public. To get fired, officers needed to go through a review board comprised of their peers. These peers were composed of police officers who were part of the internal department in charge of disciplining officers that enforced a three-pronged endeavor to remove police officers accused of misconduct: an infraction had to be determined, the review board had to find the culprit guilty, and if the infraction warranted a punishment, it could only be meted out internally. This meant that civilians, including city officials, were not permitted to be a part of the disciplinary board. At one point, Mexican American Councilman Edward Roybal "proposed a paid" citizens review board threatening the department's autonomy, but this never materialized as such.[101] One of the problems with Section 202 was that community members were precluded from being taken seriously whenever they filed a complaint against an officer. Regardless of how heinous an act was, LAPD officers in the 1950s, received treatment that levitated them above the law. Furthermore, Section 202 granted police officers accused of misconduct a twelve-month statute of limitations for anyone who brought charges

[99] James Woods, "Police and Progressives," 409.
[100] Charter of the City of Los Angeles: Article XIX Police Department Sec. 202.
[101] James Woods, "Police and Progressives," 410.

against them. Anything filed after a year was dismissed, which allowed violent police officers to remain on the streets. If people came forward, then they ran the risk of being targeted by the LAPD.

Parker was instrumental in getting Section 202 ratified before he was chief. Writing in the separation of disciplinary actions from municipal politics cemented his place in police history.[102] He became an important member of the local police union in his early days. In the decades of the 1920s and 1930s, the LAPD functioned at the behest of serving the interest of the business elite.[103] Indeed, the department was riddled with corruption and functioned like a private army for the nascent capitalist class converging in Los Angeles. The notorious Red Squads infiltrated and raided leftists labor organizations during an era when people of all races were seriously considering overthrowing the economic system that exploited millions of workers. Los Angeles had a strong leftist community and they often clashed with the police. The Manufacturers and Association and the Better America Federation in Los Angeles wanted labor unions crushed and commissioned the LAPD to carry out their orders. The LAPD, led by James Davis (1926-1929 and 1933-1939), served the political interests of these wealthy white men and orders were executed with fealty.[104] At the same time labor unions were subdued, police officers and firefighters were joining themselves – in the Fire and Police Protective League.[105] The irony should not be lost on the reader; crushing unions while benefiting from the struggles that unions advocated for, such as implementing worker protections. It was within the League that Parker learned to cultivate his political aspirations that led to protecting his fellow police officers from getting dismissed for infringements on the civilian population.

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[102] O.W. Wilson, *Parker on Police*, x.
[103] Joe Domanick, *To Protect and to Serve,* 55.
[104] Ibid., 63.
[105] Ibid., 93.

Section 202 was clearly a powerful political tool. Parker understood the importance of establishing the LAPD's autonomy, but also the imposing impact it would have as chief of police. When accusations of violence surfaced, the Chief appointed a Board of Rights and chose the location for a hearing. The hearing needed to have a date set no more than thirty days after a police officer was accused.[106] In 1934, with the help of Earl Cooke, another union member, they rewrote Section 202 and consolidated their independence for police officers and firefighters alike. As an astute police officer with a law degree, Section 202 was codified and effectively guaranteed the LAPD and local firefighters the right to power of an attorney with a public hearing whenever allegations of transgressions were made.[107] The institutionalization of Section 202 set a precedent. Self-policing was established and presented as reforms that satisfied both politicians and high-ranking police officers.[108]

In addition to devising a plan for police training, Section 202 became a model for other departments in the country to mimic. The conception of an internal investigation unit within police departments designed to eliminate corruption was also established by other police departments. More importantly, police departments could ward off public criticism and protect officers from penalties for their offenses. Furthermore, the police commission, which was usually comprised of non-police civilians, could no longer hold the chief responsible for allegations of wrongdoings. Codifying Section 202 meant that the chief could no longer be removed by the city's politicians unless he was forced to resign.[109] The chief of the LAPD now had the same rights and protections as its foot soldiers on the streets of Los Angeles.

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[106] Charter of the City of Los Angeles: Article XIX Police Department Sec. 202.
[107] Joe Domanick, *To Protect and to Serve,* 94.
[108] James Woods, "Police and Progressives," 411.
[109] Joe Domanick, *To Protect and to Serve,* 94.

Section 202 reshaped policing in Los Angeles not only for officers, but for the position of chief as well. The chief could argue that complete autonomy was needed as a strategy to fight criminal activity.[110] The Protective League gave unprecedented powers to the chief of police, solidifying a lifetime tenure. Hypothetically, if the police commission charged the chief with misconduct, he would be entitled to a full hearing where he had the right to cross-examine civilian witnesses, the commissioners, and the mayor.[111] This was a role that Parker would be able to handle effortlessly because he was trained as an attorney. Moreover, if the chief believed his constitutional rights were violated, he could take the case all the way to the Supreme Court. He could also exert his power by suing in state and federal courts. In 1937, the charter was put to a final vote and won by approximately ten thousand votes.[112] But the main prize of Section 202 was full autonomy from both the public and city politicians. Parker altered the course of police history.

Dragnet as Real Life

The LAPD's new revamped image was vital for Parker. For the public to accept that the police were the bulwarks between law and order, the media occupied an important position in disseminating Parker's vision of policing. Parker had no problem enlisting the help of the media to support his rhetoric. The "thin blue line" idiom that Parker espoused was the antecedent to slogans such as, "back the blue" or "blue lives matter" that are used today. "Blue lives matter" does not exist in the same realm in comparison to what African Americans have historically experienced in the United States. Nor should it be entertained as such. To portray police officers

[110] Edward Escobar, "Bloody Christmas" 171 - 199.
[111] Joe Domanick, *To Protect and to Serve,* 95.
[112] Ibid.

as a targeted group devalues the struggles that African Americans and people of Mexican descent have undergone. Simply put, there is no such thing as a "blue life," nor have they ever been victimized by powerful structures through violence and institutional discriminatory practices. Both eras demonstrate that whenever citizens have protested police violence and killings, reactionary politics have surfaced to frame protesters as lawless thugs. Parker understood this and weaponized his rhetoric to shape the image of the LAPD as an institution that served to protect the general public. Newspapers, such as the *Los Angeles Times* and *Los Angeles Examiner* with its history of suppressing radical dissent, supported Parker's policies. Like Parker, both newspapers held views steeped in conservative ideology. Harry Chandler, a committed anti-union boss and conservative Republican, owned the *Los Angeles Times* which ran stories depicting people of Mexican descent as un-American, especially during the labor strikes in the 1930s.[113] Mexican workers experienced a considerable amount of exploitation and racism that led to social unrest at various times during the early and mid-twentieth century labor strikes. Agricultural growers would summon the LAPD to break up strikes and to quell worker rebellions.

An ethical component to the strikes was the right to better living conditions. But instead, the uprisings were used to racialize people of Mexican descent through a racial hegemonic order. Class, ethnicity, and nationalism were all used as weapons to position people of Mexican descent as un-American and rendered as an unprotected group of people. If they were disempowered politically, then the growers could continue to exploit people of Mexican descent's labor. Yet, the resistance factor also meant that a political and ethnic identity was developing because capitalism reduces workers as disposable. Indeed, Michael Omi and Howard Winant have argued that the social organization of the United States is needed to divide groups into dominant positions vis-à-

[113] Mike Davis and Jon Weiner, *Set the Night on Fire*, 40.

vis powerlessness.[114] The process of racialization functions as a mechanism to split groups, but also important to this sociohistorical process is how people began to organize themselves to challenge systems of oppression buttressed by the police.

The LAPD continuously intervened on behalf of the growers regardless of if the conflict was within or outside the city limits.[115] With such social conflict, the LAPD stood alongside agricultural growers, employers, and the former Immigration and Naturalization Services.[116] This cooperation with the police resulted in labor repression while the LAPD refused to protect the farmworkers. These clashes sowed the seeds of mistrust among the Mexican American community and the LAPD. Mexican workers were not the only ethnic group that demanded better living conditions. The Filipino Federated Workers Union and the Japanese Farm Workers Union of California both stood in solidarity with people of Mexican descent during these labor disputes.[117] Nonetheless, an examination of the Filipino and Japanese workers is beyond the scope of this research. Still, with the cooperation of these local newspapers – *L.A. Times* and *the Examiner* – Mexican workers were consistently depicted as the aggressors while the LAPD was framed as the true victims of these skirmishes.

In addition to transforming the LAPD's image from a corrupted agency to the epitome of police professionalism, Parker was a skilled orator who promulgated information that swayed public opinion in his favor. He was an official consultant for the television show *Dragnet,* a program that portrayed local police officers as friendly, law-abiding, and a crime-fighting force in

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[114] Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*, 109.
[115] Edward J. Escobar, *Race, Police, and the Making of a Political Identity: Mexican Americans and the Los Angeles Police Department 1900 – 1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), *49.*
[116] Ibid.
[117] Ibid., 97.

the Los Angeles community. *Dragnet* was viewed by millions of Americans weekly, and scenes of affable police officers seeped into the consciousness of millions of Americans who tuned in. The television show may have been created by actor and producer Jack Webb, but Parker had a prominent role in controlling and revising scripts to present a supposed authentic portrayal of the LAPD. Moreover, Parker reserved the right to halt production if he objected on technical grounds.[118] Scripts needed to be submitted to the LAPD division, Public Information Division (PID), and approved by Parker before the show was broadcasted.[119] Viewers believed the onscreen persona of police officers as a genuine portrayal of what constituted a trusted public civil servant.[120] As a trusted purveyor of law enforcement, Parker strategically utilized these depictions as a vehicle to gain the public's compliance and shape ideas of the good and bad guy dichotomy.

Initially, Parker was leery of using *Dragnet* to promote the LAPD's image. When Webb allowed Parker's PID to review and approve scripts, he signed on as a permanent consultant. Parker stated in an interview with Donald McDonald for the *One of the Series of the Interviews of the American Character*, "We participated in the editing of the scripts and in their filming. If we had any objections on technical grounds our objections were met."[121] For example, Parker did not allow Webb to employ the word "cop" in the program because he felt it was a pejorative term to describe police officers. Historians, such as Mike Davis and Jon Weiner argue that *Dragnet* set the template for subsequent "cop" shows that we see today.[122] The program was largely used to manipulate public opinion and was accepted as an accurate representation. *Dragnet* led to more

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[118] Donald McDonald, "The Police" *Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions* (April, 1962) 13 - 19.
[119] Ibid., 14.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Mike Davis and Jon Weiner, *Set the Night on Fire*, 42.

shows and movies that exulted the police as stoic warriors standing as the only defense against criminals. The image helped shape "the thin blue line" narrative that is pervasive today. However, he was highly criticized by many in the African American and Mexican American communities for his methods of racial profiling and relentless harassment.[123]

While many nonwhite residents have a long history of mistrusting the LAPD, the suppression of labor organizations and civil rights activism created tension between the department and communities of color. The fissures between the LAPD and African Americans widened when young white hoodlums were protected by the LAPD.[124] Incidents of fistfights breaking out between black and white kids in local high schools in the early 1950s shows how the LAPD thought of African American kids. White students were not charged with any crime.[125] White gangs, such as the 'Spookhunters' have become a relic of the past; they are rarely discussed as part the city's white supremacist gang culture. But one of the reasons African American teenagers formed gangs was to protect themselves from racist white gangs. Such racist attacks were never questioned by the LAPD.[126] Instead, Parker defended his department by alleging that the black community had more criminal activity than the predominantly white areas of Los Angeles – mainly residing in the Westside and Central regions of the city. It was a used by the LAPD to begin linking race to crime. Historian Khalil Gibran Muhammad notes that crime discourse fueled white supremacy as it spread from the south to the northern cities. "Race-relation writers had inscribed

[123] Donald McDonald, "The Police,"13 - 19.
[124] George M. O'Connor, "The Negro and the Police in Los Angeles," 66.
[125] Ibid., 66.
[126] Mike Davis, *City of Quartz,* 293.

criminality onto nearly every aspect of black people's existence," he argued.[127] This stereotype followed African Americans as they migrated to Los Angeles in the 1940s and 1950s.

Racial tension in Los Angeles persisted with Parker at the helm. He claimed that people of Mexican descent had a genetic predisposition for violence and stated:

> The Latin population that came here in great strength were here before us, and presented a great problem because I worked over on the East Side when men had to work in pairs… and it's because some of these people being not too far removed from the wild tribes of the district of the inner mountains of Mexico. I don't think you can throw the genes out of the question when discussing behavior patterns of people.[128]

When confronted by Mexican American Councilman Edward Roybal who demanded an apology for his comments, Parker refused.[129] Parker's attitude was not only shared by the department, but often used to justify its violent policing methods. Parker claimed that people of Mexican descent committed five times more crime per capita than the white community while insinuating culture was the root of these social problems.[130] Though Roybal chided Parker for his racist comments, the city council ignored the violence seen in both black and brown communities and consistently supported Parker's policing methods. His reputation proceeded him as a police officer who championed the "thin blue line" rhetoric, but black and brown communities regarded him as a man who perpetuated social divisions between themselves and the LAPD. The "thin blue line" language denoted that the police acted as the only defense against chaos, which was used to target black and brown people.

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[127] Khalil Gibran Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America* (London & Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 93.
[128] *California Eagle*, "Parker Claims Negro 'Provoked' Racial Slur," February 4, 1960.
[129] Ibid.
[130] James Woods, "Progressives and Policing," 464.

Parker claimed that he was misrepresented in locally owned African American newspapers and that they were out to discredit his authority. One example reported by the *California Eagle* illustrates how his outbursts at city meetings with the African American community leaders were volatile. When the community religious leaders reminded Parker that no one was above the law, including himself, he directed his anger toward them.[131] He claimed that, "certain minority groups" were attempting to "distract attention from the high incidence of criminal activity within those groups" and that the press was unfairly focusing on police brutality instead of the bookings that overshadowed supposed minor incidents of misconduct.[132] Parker attempted to divert attention away from the department's record of violence by citing high crime rates as the reason why the LAPD remained aggressive toward these communities. The resentment, he contended, stemmed from black and brown people's poor social and economic conditions. The burden should not fall on the LAPD, but on these communities for having higher crime rates than their white counterparts.[133] Yet, citing high crime rates through the department's statistical analysis became the pretext to deploy more police officers in the growing nonwhite neighborhoods of Los Angeles. When Parker came to power in 1950, Los Angeles was experiencing an influx of migrants, specifically African Americans fleeing from the Jim Crow south and Mexican immigrants escaping the horrible conditions of poverty created by the Great Depression.

Crime Statistics as Weapons

[131] "Parker Flares up at Pastors' Meeting," *California Eagle*, May 17, 1962.
[132] Donald McDonald, "The Police" *Center for the Study of Democratic.*
[133] Ibid., 16.

When African Americans challenged the widespread violence and racism they experienced at the hands of the LAPD, Parker claimed that the racial problems in Los Angeles were not as severe as they were in the Jim Crow south.[134] Under the guise of public safety, Parker called for an increased police presence in specific areas of Los Angeles using statistics as the reason. He criminalized black and brown communities by claiming that more crime was committed in East and South Central Los Angeles as opposed to the Westside and Central regions where most whites lived. Parker's dubious reputation as a law enforcement visionary demonstrates how he viewed black and brown people during his sixteen-year tenure. His approach to combating crime targeted communities of color. Though many nonwhite residents had already been experiencing various forms of police violence before his appointment, it increased under his watch. His predecessor, William Worton, pledged to stop the police violence that tormented the African American community.[135] Just before he was replaced by Parker, Worton met with African American community leaders promising to reform the LAPD and assuage concerns over police violence. Pleas from African Americans to officers accountable went unanswered when Parker took over the LAPD. Instead, Parker doubled down on increasing the LAPD's presence throughout these neighborhoods.

Parker established a police structure that resembled a paramilitary force that gave him strict control over the department. When the police commission tried to rein in the violence in nonwhite communities, they were ignored. One such commissioner stated that Parker, "rules the force with an iron hand." He added, "the chief of police is the most powerful official in the city."[136] While his military-style of policing can be attributed to Parker's time spent in Europe as a World War II

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[134] Donald McDonald, "The Police" *Center for the Study of Democratic*, 17.
[135] George M. O'Connor, "The Negro and Police in Los Angeles," 108.
[136] James Woods, "Progressives and Police," 466.

consultant under the direction of General Dwight. D. Eisenhower, it was in Los Angeles where Parker cemented his "Police and Prisons Plan for the European Invasion" strategy. While serving in the army, he created policing systems in the cities of Frankfurt and Munich.[137] But under his leadership, racial tension grew due to policing practices that focused on criminalized black and brown people. The racial animus intensified further an already over-policed community. The use of statistics substantiated his argument that more police were needed to patrol neighborhoods like East Los Angeles. For example, he claimed that people of Mexican descent were prone to committing more crime than the Anglo population.[138]

Parker relied on collecting statistical crime information to increase the police presence in nonwhite neighborhoods. The structured violence exercised through power dynamics led to a redeployment of police officers in these communities as shown in the department's *Annual Reports*. The *Annual Reports* published in 1960 shows how African Americans were heavily policed.[139] When Parker addressed the city's business elite in 1952, he boasted about keeping records of people's "past habits and methods" as a source to predict how future crimes would be committed. The use of biometrics became an important aspect of his policing strategies. Physical characteristics were defining features for new technological advances in what Simone Browne refers to "in the verification, identification, and automation practices that enable the body to function as evidence."[140] The implications of a newly used police tool in the form of biometrics would transform policing in the years to come. To gather information on individuals, Parker needed more men to patrol these neighborhoods. In the same speech to the city's commerce

[137] Alisa Sarah Kramer, "William H. Parker and the Thin Blue Line," 32.
[138] Ian F. Haney Lopez, *Racism on Trial.* 137.
[139] Los Angeles Police Department, *Annual Reports,* 1960.
[140] Simone Browne, *Dark Matters*, 109.

leaders, he discussed how paperwork was reduced by more than half and purported to save time and energy that was redirected to investigating alleged crime scenes. The reduction of the bureaucracy was rechanneled to the streets to provide greater patrol coverage. By doing so, the LAPD began experimenting with one-man patrol cars reassigning officers who were initially on desk-duty.[141] Parker's use of gathering statistical data saw no limits. Those who defied his methods were described as supporting the criminals. As the LAPD arrested more and more people, they had little respect for constitutional rights.[142]

Chief Parker criticized anyone who he believed hindered the department's policing practices, including the State Supreme Court. On April 27, 1955, in a four to three ruling, the Supreme Court of California declared in *People v. Cahan* to overturn the conviction of Charles *Cahan* due to the LAPD's illegal use of a dictagraph[143] to obtain evidence. The Court found the use of the dictagraph machine violated Cahan's constitutional rights because his arrest was an unreasonable seizure of evidence. The evidence collected against Cahan was ruled inadmissible.[144] Still, collecting evidence by violating civil procedures did not matter to Parker. He contended that there was no evidence in which he exceeded his legal right in the *Cahan* case. In 1955, he wrote, "At the present time, I am the defendant in civil action designed to test my legal authority to use the dictograph in obtaining evidence in criminal cases, despite the fact that there is not one shred of evidence that this authority has been abused."[145] Parker defended his use of the dictograph machine to ascertain intelligence to combat crime. For Parker, the elimination of the dictograph

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[141] O.W. Wilson, *Parker on Police*, 45.
[142] Ibid., 114.
[143] Definition given by Parker: An electronic listening device, the use of which (sometimes called "bugging") consists of placing an open microphone in a room in an inconspicuous place, thus enabling the listener to hear and record all sounds which take place in that room.
[144] O.W. Wilson, *Parker on Police*, 111.
[145] Ibid., 65.

equipment meant losing an effective tool for solving crime. He opined that his department was severely hampered by depriving the usefulness of the dictograph. Parker's logic was that since wiretapping was not used to extort victims, the use of the dictograph machine was legally justifiable. Indeed, this was his reasoning for going after criminals, but Parker did use extortion to curb some of his harshest critics within the city government.[146] Moreover, his rhetoric was not only used to convince the public of the importance of utilizing such crime prevention techniques, but also to attack anyone who disagreed with his assessment of how crime should be fought. He stated, "You can't blame the police. You must blame the high court of this state and the prosecutors who favor the *Cahan* decision and the legislators who have failed to do something about it."[147] At any chance given, Parker depicted the LAPD as the victims and made an enemy out of anyone who disagreed with him. The *Cahan* decision was subsequently exploited in the 1960 LAPD's *Annual Reports* as the reason why crime increased rapidly.

The 1960 *Annual Reports* began to blame the *Cahan* decision for the reason for higher crime rates. The LAPD cited statistics to support their contentious claim that crime in the city rose by 72% from 1954 to 1960 and 90% statewide. Because the State Supreme Court invoked the exclusionary evidence rule barring police officers from forcible entries and illegal seizures, the LAPD said the court "destroyed over 100 years of precedent."[148] Additionally, Parker clashed with then California Governor, Edmund Brown, over surveillance strategies to apprehend alleged narcotics dealers. When Brown presented Parker with statistical evidence between 1958 to 1960 to show that felony arrests only resulted in half of the convictions for the entire state, Parker was angered. He contested Brown's data by releasing a nineteen-page letter claiming that the

[146] Joe Domanick, *To Protect and to Serve*, 154.
[147] Jack Webb, *The Badge*, 264.
[148] Los Angeles Police Department *Annual Reports*, 1960, 20.

governor's figures were deliberately false.[149] The LAPD cited crime statistics to increase police presence in nonwhite neighborhoods, but they were also conveniently used to blame higher crime rates on the State Supreme Court's *Cahan* decision. Parker claimed that criminals will engage in more nefarious transgressions because the ruling gave criminals an advantage over the police.

Moreover, Parker asserted that the so-called rising class of criminals was an invasion coming from within the country. When he spoke to the city's business leaders, he often referred to the United States as a democracy that was at risk of sinking into peril by an army of criminals. He discussed criminals in a language cloaked in racism that situated them as "the other," an outside invader where Americans' ideals were in danger of being subverted. Again, the "thin blue line" rhetoric was being used to legitimize the authority of the LAPD. He described these so-called invaders as an increasing criminal army of approximately six million people living in the United States and suggested that they were somehow organizing themselves into columns intending to supplant the American way of life. The six million figure that Parker made up was never supported with evidence. Instead, it was part of his rhetorical appeal to instill fear among the Los Angeles public. He said, "Someday the American people will have to wake up to facts. They had better realize that the criminal army they have in their midst numbers some six million people – a number which is far greater than social elements which have overthrown established governments before!"[150] The skilled orator that he was made families out to be innocent bystanders caught in-between the crossfires of criminals and the police. Parker cited a speech given by Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) director, J. Edgar Hoover, in 1953 that claimed crime cost American families $495 a year – $4,829 today. He continued, "the nation's total crime bill at twenty billion

[149] James Woods, "Progressives and Police" 444.
[150] O.W. Wilson, *Parker on Police*, 217.

dollars a year which is ten times the total given each year to all of the churches in the United States."[151] Parker directly challenged detractors by claiming alleged criminals were ahead of the curve, immersing themselves in technological advancements. He also admonished the prison system for being too lenient for releasing prisoners early as the cause of rising crime.

While Parker criticized the prison system, he deflected the cause of rising crime away from his department. By censuring the prison system for granting clemency to incarcerated individuals, he said the LAPD was an overburden department that stood between criminals and law-abiding citizens.[152] Because the LAPD was viewed as an institution overworked and underappreciated, he called on the public to provide information to the department while reminding them of their obligations and allegiance to the LAPD. He claimed that more than half of the people paroled reengaged in criminal activities when released while criticizing the parole system in California. Parker worked to garner more support by shifting responsibility onto the entire correctional supervision system as another reason for higher crime rates.[153] This strategy became particularly useful to Parker because he was able to further tighten his grip over a city that was already acquiescing to his demands. In 1960, during a two-day hearing of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Parker used the department's aggregated data to argue that African Americans and people of Mexican descent comprised a majority of the crime. According to the LAPD's report, African Americans constituted about 12% of the city's population, but were responsible for nearly half of the city's crime rate at 48.4%. People of Mexican descent made up 10% of the population and were held accountable for 20.2% of all criminal complaints.[154] Thus, 22% of the city's population

[151] O.W. Wilson, *Parker on Police*, 67.
[152] Los Angeles Police Department *Annual Reports,* 1960, 21.
[153] O.W. Wilson, *Parker on Police*, 72.
[154] "Beavers' Charges False, Says Parker" *California Eagle*, January 28, 1960.

was responsible for nearly three-fourths of the crime. What is more, aggregated data became a salient component to policing and was used to validate their role in Los Angeles.

When Parker attempted to justify his argument that the exclusionary rule hindered the LAPD's methods to combat crime, he cited statistics as the cause of rising crime. His effort to connect crime to early prison releases was troubling. Parker contended that the *Cahan* ruling would contribute to rising lawlessness. Since 1944, the California prison population increased steadily, notwithstanding the Korean Civil War, ranging from 10 to 200 a month. The population of prisoners reduced because conscription deterred incarcerated people. According to Parker, the prison population plateaued in 1955 because of the *Cahan* decision. California reached an all-time high of prisoners one month before the case was decided at 15,668 prisoners. The number decreased to 15, 230 by the end of year. For ten years, the state's prison population increased gradually. He used these statistics to show the effectiveness of the department's illegal searches while disregarding the protection that the Fourth Amendment guaranteed for all citizens.[155] Instead, incarcerating alleged criminals regardless of their Fourth Amendment rights was more important. His ability to make law-abiding citizens feel like they were under a constant threat from the *Cahan* decision is where he stood to gain public support for his policing methods. Despite Parker blaming the State for rising crime, the Court warned the public that police impunity was dangerous. They stated, "Today, one of the foremost public concerns is the police state, and recent history has demonstrated all too clearly how short the step is from lawless although efficient enforcement of the law to the stamping of human rights."[156] The statement infuriated Parker. For him, the sheer audacity to portray the LAPD as the real threat to civil rights was preposterous.

[155] O.W. Wilson, *Parker on Police*, 121.
[156] Ibid., 126.

Controlling the Narrative

For Parker, controlling the narrative was particularly critical to gaining the public's support for his policing methods. As chief, his policing strategies purported to protect all law-abiding citizens. For the narrative to be accepted, he collaborated with the city's reporters. Parker cultivated this strategy when he was a young lieutenant in the 1930s, gifting reporters with bottles of liquor.[157] When accusations of police misconduct arose, this induced Parker to create the Department's Community Relations Detail, which worked out of the Public Information Division. The program received tremendous support from most white-owned newspapers.[158] He did not have to work hard to gain their support since the LAPD had historically worked closely with the local press, such as the *Los Angeles Examiner* and *Los Angeles Times*.[159] With the full support of these newspapers, Parker used them to shield himself from African American newspapers. He claimed their reports on police violence were false.[160] He questioned the validity and said that they were sensationalizing their stories to increase sales. Rather than looking inward at his department's mishandling of community relations, he reproached both the African American newspapers and arrestees for falsifying charges against the LAPD. Through his Community Relations Detail, he attempted to work with the community press, but still accused "non-Caucasian persons" of having a "cop-hating attitude" when it came to the ongoing police violence.[161] He was quick to point out that these newspapers were fabricating incidents of police brutality and deflected the department's inactions of disciplining police officers involved in violence, including murdered civilians.

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[157] Joe Domanick, *To Protect and to Serve,* 103.
[158] William H. Parker, "The Police Role in Community Relations," 375.
[159] Edward J. Escobar, *Race, Police, and the Making of a Political Identity,* 55.
[160] George M. O'Connor, "The Negro and Police in Los Angeles," 203.
[161] Ibid., 375.

Under Parker's command, the LAPD committed numerous acts of violence on the civilian population. A member of the legal redress committee for the NAACP, attorney Everette R. Porter, said officers would never use violence if they knew there would be consequences for their actions. Porter believed if strict instructions were given out by Parker, then police violence would decrease. Moreover, if a citizen experienced violence by an LAPD officer, then the citizen was at risk of getting arrested on trumped-up charges.[162] One such incident can be recounted in 1952 when an African American named James Crawford had his eyesight permanently damaged by two LAPD officers. Crawford was hospitalized for a month due to a lacerated eyeball, as well as suffering injuries to his body. The police officers involved in this atrocity were part of the vice squad and claimed that they were investigating an illegal gambling party. Crawford was supposed to meet a landlord for a possible apartment rental. Unfortunately, the rental was within proximity of the party. When the police arrived, they accused Crawford of being at the gambling party when they pummeled him, breaking his eyeglasses in the process. During the altercation, a piece of his eyeglasses was lodged into his eye, causing him to have permanent damage. Crawford filed a lawsuit for $1,250,000 against the city of Los Angeles for the encounter.[163] The amount was unheard of at the time. Such incidents were how the LAPD operated. Neither one of the police officers involved in the beating was ever charged nor did they receive any disciplinary actions for their involvement. Instead, Parker accused local nonwhite newspapers of rousing resentment toward the LAPD whenever his police officers beat unarmed African Americans.[164]

African American newspapers regularly reported on the widespread abuses of the LAPD. However, Parker's sentiments against these newspapers were also shared by the department's

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[162] George M. O'Connor, "The Negro and Police in Los Angeles," 136.
[163] Ibid., 133.
[164] William H. Parker, "The Police Role in Community Relations," 376.

leadership. They too believed that the stories were fabricated. In 1954, a police survey conducted by a researcher who wanted to learn more about the race-relations was assured by an LAPD lieutenant that race-related training was sufficient. But the newspapers knew this was false. The same lieutenant reported that federal plans would deploy federal troops if an uprising were to occur in the city.[165] As early as the 1950s, concerns of potential rebellions were being discussed among the LAPD's leadership. The LAPD publicly did not believe the local black newspapers' stories of police violence and frequently denied allegations of their officers involved in such acts. Either they willfully chose to ignore the culture of violence perpetuated by their officers or simply disregarded African Americans' struggles with the police.[166] They were unable to understand the rising tension among the city's most marginalized groups. In the same 1954 survey, the leadership claimed that the Zoot Suit Riots occurred because Mexican youth were jealous of white servicemen dating Mexican women, which led to a full-blown violent encounter between both groups.[167] One can discern that sexual harassment may have likely contributed to the clash. But just as critical to understanding the conflicts is how the zoot suiters regularly were harassed by the LAPD.[168] Zoot suiters were young people of Mexican descent who dressed well and rejected whiteness which angered racists for not conforming to their American standards. In the mid-fifties, the LAPD leadership must have known that Los Angeles was a city ready to explode again, as assaults based on racism were becoming common. Incidents, such as unsolved bombings on African American homes, were believed to be planted by angry white residents who refused to live among them.

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[165] George M. O'Connor, "The Negro and Police in Los Angeles," 152.
[166] William H. Parker, "The Police Role in Community Relations," 377.
[167] George M. O'Connor, "The Negro and Police in Los Angeles," 159.
[168] Edward J. Escobar, *Race, Police, and the Making of a Political Identity*, 183.

Intelligence Division

Simone Browne offers an important theory on the surveillance state. Browne discusses the psychological impacts that surveillance has on targeted populations. This is useful when considering how Parker implemented his surveillance strategies to quell dissent. Analyzing surveillance strategies centers the conditions that nonwhite communities endured during Parker's tenure. Yet, such surveillance methods were not limited to marginalized populations, they were also extended to politicians who questioned Parker's ability to lead the LAPD. It was a system of social control used to curb anyone who threatened his authority. For Parker, relinquishing control over an authoritative institution like the LAPD was such a threat that he would go to any lengths to hold on to his power.

Officially, Parker created the Intelligence Division to stop organized crime from spreading.[169] However, the Intelligence Division was not utilized to thwart organized crime syndicates, but to spy and gather information on his opponents that he would later use for political leverage. His targets ranged from politicians to social activists. Initially, the Intelligence Division began with four detectives, but would grow to eighty-four cops by 1969 – three years after Parker's death. As the squad went to work, they focused their efforts to coerce and intimidate people who disagreed with Parker's policies.[170] As such, he was not a man to be trifled with because he kept extensive secret files on public figures. LAPD historian Joe Domanick mentions that Parker's secret files were akin to the way that the former Soviet Union's intelligence units gathered information on potential enemies of the state. Though Parker despised Communism and often

[169] O.W. Wilson, *Parker on Police*, 61.
[170] Joe Domanick, *To Protect and to Serve,* 155.

accused the Soviet Union of meddling in the affairs of the police, he falsely claimed that the Civil Rights Movement was controlled by the Kremlin. His intelligence gathering may have rivaled the surveillance strategies employed by the USSR under Joseph Stalin, but Parker made certain that these files would be used to tarnish the reputation of his opponents.[171]

Indeed, the intelligence that Parker collected was used against people who challenged his authority, but it also served a purpose to subdue politicians that eventually became his subordinates. By bending his opponents into submission, he was able to control the city. For example, Parker spied on Democrats who disagreed with his methods of policing. He used these files to pressure candidates to drop out of political races by exposing their infidelities, including intervening in the US Senate race of 1963.[172] His methods used to subjugate his detractors were only rivaled by the FBI's director, J. Edgar Hoover, who also kept endless secret files on people he deemed radical threats to the United States.[173]

The pretext for the creation of the Intelligence Division was to surveil organized crime elements in Los Angeles. Yet, Parker contended that the Division was established to share resources with other departments around the country.[174] Disseminating and sharing information to prevent rising crime on a federal scale was Parker's ambition, but it never materialized as a cooperative initiative. As the unit grew, so did Parker's secret files. The files were riddled with half-truths and unfounded allegations that functioned only to strengthen Parker's control over Los Angeles. It did not matter to Parker that these files were full of misinformation. What mattered was that they were weaponized to bring down some of his harshest critics during a time when

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[171] Mary McAuley, *Soviet Politics 1917 – 1991* (Oxford: University Press, 1992), 51.
[172] Joe Domanick, *To Protect and to Serve,* 158.
[173] Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, *From #BLACKLIVESMATTER to Black Liberation* (Chicago: Haymarket Book, 2016), 44.
[174] O.W. Wilson, *Parker on Police*, 64.

nonwhite communities were gaining some power. Those who boldly challenged Parker's power grip saw through his thinly concealed veil of racism.

No one was safe from Parker's paranoia. Many people found a place in his intelligence files. By the mid-seventies, the Intelligence Unit amassed nearly two million dossiers with over fifty-five thousand people, including the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA), National Organization for Women, and the World Council of Churches.[175] He not only created a unit dedicated to tracking his enemies, but he put forth a policing technique that Vollmer never advised to do in his policing theories.

The effects of Parker's policing practices are still felt today in the poor and working-class nonwhite communities of Los Angeles. The most paramount of these consequences is that the community does not accept the LAPD as a manifestation of its "to protect and serve" dictum. The communities most impacted by these policing methods would go on to resist by forming political coalitions.[176] This will be explored in the subsequent chapter. Today, Parker is revered as the man who revamped the LAPD by pushing for higher salaries, professionalism, and applying technological advancements to prevent crime. It is also just as important to remember that Parker bitterly complained about anyone who disagreed with his policies, including the State Supreme Court. He buttressed white supremacy by falsely claiming nonwhites had a penchant toward crime due to their genetic inferiority. This spurred him to deploy more police officers in brown and black neighborhoods that resembled a paramilitary force in a warzone. The statistical data used by the LAPD only reinforced racist ideas, notably as he manipulated the figures to work in his favor to promote the LAPD as the only defense between order and chaos. Moreover, instilling fear within

[175] Joe Domanick, *To Protect and to Serve,* 160.
[176] Mike Davis, *City of Quartz,* 298.

the white community was a contributing factor to gain support. Reexamining Parker's legacy and his policing strategies are important if we are going to understand how the LAPD earned a nefarious reputation for violence. Such violence committed on African Americans and people of Mexican descent became institutionalized and continued well after his death in 1966. Yet, it is the stories of the aforementioned that must be centered to understand the legacy of Parker's policing strategies.

Chapter Two:

"Race, Citizenship, and the Deportation Regime"

On August 11, 1965, an uprising occurred in the African American community of Watts, Los Angeles. It began when California Highway Patrol (CHP) officer, Lee W. Minikus, pulled over and arrested twenty-one-year-old Marquette Frye.[177] African American residents had grown angry with the way law enforcement had consistently mistreated their community. Residents distrusted all factions of police institutions and believed leaders like William H. Parker carried a deep-seated hatred of them. The Governor's Commission on the Los Angeles Riots reported, "Chief of Police Parker appears to be the focal point of the criticism within the Negro community. He is a man distrusted by most Negros and they carefully analyze for possible anti-Negro meaning almost every action he takes and every statement he makes."[178] African Americans experienced poverty, racial segregation, unemployment or underemployment, and police brutality living in Los Angeles. The Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), known for its use of excessive force and violence, may not have pulled over Frye, but the insurrection began because of the hyper-policing they had been enduring since the 1940s.

The department characterized the uprising as an insurgency akin to the war that was being fought in Southeast Asia. Chief William H. Parker compared the insurgency "very much like fighting the Viet Cong." The LAPD and National Guard responded by killing thirty-one people

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[177] Raphael J. Soneshein, *Politics in Black and White: Race and Power in Los Angeles* (New Jersey: Princeton University Pres, 1994), 76.

[178] Governor's Commission on the Los Angeles Riots, Law Enforcement: The Thin Thread, 1965, *California History,* Vol. 92, Number 3, pp. 4–10.

during the civil unrest.[179] The uprising spurred the LAPD to strengthen their tactical wing, further fortifying the "thin blue line" demarcation that Parker frequently spoke of. His legacy has been revered as the epitome of police professionalism, centering the LAPD as the standard model for hundreds of American police departments to mimic. Yet, the way Parker's career ended is the same way it began, by violently suppressing dissent in communities of color.

The policing methods that developed out of the Parker era can still be seen today. The racial and ethnic fissures established were produced by the surveillance strategies that the LAPD practiced daily. Parker's de facto racial segregation left its imprint on the city years after he died. Moreover, when Parker failed to act to quell the racial terrorism in the form of bombings by fascist elements, African Americans felt vulnerable. In a city that purports to "protect and serve," such a slogan was meaningless for people of color. Furthermore, as more and more people of Mexican descent moved to Los Angeles, they were targeted for deportation irrespective of their citizenship status. Parker worked closely with the federal government to conduct sweeps to detain, imprison, and forcefully expel people of Mexican descent from the interior of the United States. He also proved to be a significant obstacle for nonwhite officers to ascend the LAPD ranks while he was in charge. As a result, a historical amnesia has emerged, obscuring the experiences of racial segregation and discrimination that often diverts our attention toward the Jim Crow south. Though history has redirected our attention to the south as a region that experienced widespread racism, it is crucial to reexamine this history by challenging the false narrative that presents Los Angeles as a bastion of liberalism – a city that claims to be accepting of all lifestyles and people. As such, local newspaper like the *Los Angeles Times* played a role in the criminalization of communities of

[179] Elizabeth Hinton, F*rom the War on Poverty to the War on Crime: The Making of Mass Incarceration in America* (Cambridge: Harvard Press, 2016), 69.

color. However, the *California Eagle* – an African American-owned and operated newspaper – challenged the "official" narrative written by the *Times*. The significance is that the *Eagle* provided a counter-story to the mainstream narrative that supported Parker's policing methods.

Fascism and Complicity in Los Angeles

On March 16, 1952, fear of race riots began to permeate Los Angeles as several homemade bombs ignited across the city, targeting African American residents. The West Adams District had been a historically white community and did not welcome African American families. The first bomb destroyed the home of William Bailey – an African American man who was the head of the science department at Carver Junior High and field secretary for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).[180] The force of the bombing was felt for twelve square city blocks.[181] The house across the street from the Bailey family was also destroyed by a bomb. It was owned by a man named Ralph Martinez. Martinez planned on renting his house to another African American family. In addition to these two explosions, Sallie H. Mazoway, a white real estate agent had her home bombed as well. Four months later, on July 25, 1952 another house on the same street was blown up several days after it was bought by a Japanese American doctor named M.D. Matsumoto.[182] Fortunately, no causalities were reported. This terrorism was confirmed by the LAPD as the work of skilled professionals. Though there was no doubt that the bombs were premeditated, no suspects were ever investigated or brought to justice.[183]

[180] George M. O'Connor, "The Negro and the Police in Los Angeles," 139.
[181] *The Crisis*, April 1952.
[182] "What happened on Dunsmuir," *Los Angeles Times*, July 20, 2007.
[183] George M. O'Connor, "The Negro and the Police in Los Angeles" 139.

Gerald L. K. Smith was the leader of the Christian Nationalist Crusade, a right-wing organization that masqueraded as a faith-based religion. The organization distributed inflammatory literature against African Americans and the so-called perils of "race-mixing." The propaganda was fraught with racist ideals that presented the group as a patriotic organization. Decades before the term "white nationalism" was used in the media as an alternative to traditional American conservative ideology, Smith advanced his brand of fascist rhetoric to a massive audience in Los Angeles. Most of Smith's followers were elderly whites signaling that they resisted the racial demographic changes, expressly among African Americans. The increasing African American population in Los Angeles coincided with the rise of fascism under Smith's leadership. He distributed a racist magazine aptly named *The Cross and the Flag* that produced stories of saving "the white race from mongrelization."[184] The driving force behind Smith's so-called racial crusade was to maintain strict housing segregation.[185] One of its principles outlined in *The Cross and the Flag* stated, "Fight all attempts being made to force intermixture of the black and white races."[186] For Smith and the Christian Nationalist Crusade, the goal was to uphold white supremacy in the public sphere. However, these bombings did not dissuade African Americans from relocating to Southern California even after the LAPD did not apprehend any suspects tied to the bombings. The Christian Nationalist Crusaders were allowed to continue their business affairs in Southern California and were left alone to promote racism that masqueraded as a faith-based institution.

The LAPD did not attempt to question anyone responsible for the bombings in the West Adams district. As a result, Bailey sued the city for damages for $100,000. The failure on the part

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[184] George M. O'Connor, "The Negro and the Police in Los Angeles," 89.
[185] Ibid.
[186] Ibid.

of LAPD to investigate the terrorist acts led Bailey to question if the department had any sincere motivation to bring the suspects to justice. "The indifference of official Los Angeles to the serious lack of police protection for Negroes moving into 'new' areas in the city is a problem that may well explode into a race riot the next time an act of violence is visited upon a Negro family," he said. In addition to the bombings, crosses were burned across the city. Yet, the LAPD did not act with urgency. Bailey believed the inaction of the LAPD further emboldened the suspects to commit pernicious undertakings at the expense of terrorizing black residents. "I have noted this lack of concern from the mayor down to the Chief of Police. Even the Grand Jury has seemingly been convinced by police reports that "all is well on Dunsmuir." He continued, "The failure to apprehend one single suspect in any instances gives the go-signal to the bigots and lets minority group persons know beyond a shadow of a doubt just what to expect in the way of protection."[187] For African Americans, they could not rely on the LAPD or the city for protection.

Space, Race, and Invisibility

These bombings were not isolated incidents. Racial terrorism was well-known in the United States during this era. African Americans had experienced this for decades in the south and many decided to make the arduous journey to northern and western cities in search of safety and new opportunities.[188] The racist violence committed against African Americans in the Jim Crow south impelled many to find seemingly safer locations. The United States operated under an apartheid state where virtually all nonwhites were reduced to second-class citizenry. Yet, Los

[187] George M. O'Connor, "The Negro and the Police in Los Angeles" 139.
[188] Donna Murch, *Living for the City,* 4.

Angeles was touted as a city where African Americans could start a new life. A city that Dr. Du Bois once boasted to be "wonderful" for African Americans, that provided opportunities for prosperity. He wrote, "Nowhere in the United States is the Negro so well and beautifully housed, nor the average efficiency and intelligence in the colored population so high."[189] Indeed, Los Angeles was presented as a city that offered plentiful opportunities for African Americans. But, the material conditions were questionable. The white polity of Los Angeles pushed African American migrants into spaces that rendered them invisible. Most began making the south central region their new home away from the visibility of white communities. Charles W. Mills notes that the body becomes unseen when "(the white male body) is being presupposed as the somatic norm." He adds, "the body vanishes, becomes theoretically unimportant, just as the physical space inhabited by body is ostensibly theoretically unimportant."[190] Here, invisible bodies are placed in south Los Angeles away from downtown and judged based on cultural and phenotypical differences that become normalized as social markers.

In 1956, Parker emphatically claimed that Los Angeles did not have the same racial problems as the Jim Crow south.[191] However, the city was split into two, one where whites were provided with legal protection from the LAPD. Their race afforded them an extension of social benefits like those of a person who owns property. Nonwhites had the opposite experience. Instead, African Americans and people of Mexican descent lived under a quasi-military occupying police force that patrolled their neighborhoods in great numbers; a police state that kept them restricted to live in crowded spaces through economic and psychical strictures. Though Parker believed that the LAPD was, "not equipped to deal with racial, religious, or political prejudice," he enforced the

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[189] Lonnie G. Bunch, "A Past Not Necessarily Prologue," 101.
[190] Charles W. Mills, *The Racial Contract* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1997), 53.
[191] William H. Parker, "The Police Role in Community Relations," 1956.

separation of nonwhites from the white population through police patrols depriving African Americans and people of Mexican descent the same legal police protection that white citizens took for granted.[192]

Between 1950 and 1966, racial classifications determined the level of protection one would receive from the LAPD. Business elites shared the same social composition with the police, which was white, male, Protestant, and Republican. Their interests were protected by the LAPD. Together, they crushed political dissent and targeted leftists who challenged their legal authority.[193] Chery Harris' conceptualization of "Whiteness as Property" provides an important analytical tool for thinking about how race was measured through the lens of property value. According to Harris, property and race are inextricably linked in the United States, and in the process produce racial subordinate positions mostly found among communities of color.[194] Racial identity, in this context, is measured by how certain groups are policed rendering them valueless if they are classified nonwhite. A political identity that did not aligned with right-wing ideology was likewise devalued.

Jim Crow in Los Angeles

Before the United States entered World War II in December of 1941, hundreds of families of Japanese descent made their home in the downtown region of Los Angeles, also known as Little Tokyo. After entering the war, the United States used the military to incarcerate 110,000 people of Japanese ancestry. President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 based on

[192] O.W. Wilson, *Parker on Police*, 12.
[193] Joseph Woods, "The Progressives and the Police," 9.
[194] Cheryl Harris, "Whiteness as Property," 277.

preventing espionage.[195] Without providing evidence that supported claims of potential subversive activities, the federal government imprisoned Japanese and Japanese Americans in War Relocation Authority camps. The government used rhetoric that euphemistically characterized the imprisonment of Japanese Americans as a safety concern. For example, "evacuation" and "assembly centers" were used instead of concentration camps or prisons.[196] Little Tokyo was left vacant as African Americans from the south moved into the area. When the war ended, Japanese Americans who returned to Little Tokyo lived peacefully alongside African Americans. Some African Americans began to venture east toward the Hollywood area, while the vast majority moved south, living under densely crowded conditions.[197] Most people lived east of Main Street from 1st Street to Manchester, as well as between Main Street and Vermont Avenue to Jefferson and Slauson Avenues.[198] When they attempted to move into other sections of the city, they were prevented from doing so.

In 1948, the United States Supreme Court ruled that racial housing segregation was unconstitutional. A family from Texas, named the Laws, took their case to the United States Supreme Court. The Laws lived in Los Angeles for thirty years. In 1926, the family settled in Watts and opened a restaurant in a multiracial community. They purchased property in 1936 on the Good Year Tract located in Watts. It was not against the law to buy property, but African Americans were barred from living on the purchased property. In 1940, the Laws decided to live on the property and contested the racial restriction law. Within a few days, the family received a

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[195] H.W. Brands, *Traitor to His Class: The Privileged Life and Radical Presidency of Franklin Delano Roosevelt* (New York: Anchor Books, 2008), 659.
[196] "from the Power of Words Japanese American Citizens League," *Everything's an Argument* ed. Andrea A. Lunsford, John J. Rusziewicz, and Keith Walters, (Boston and New York: Beford/St. Martin's, 2019) 669.
[197] George M. O'Connor, "The Negro and the Police," 82.
[198] Lonnie G. Bunch "A Past Not Necessarily Prologue," 119.

notice to vacate, but defied the judge's order. Their choices were simple: either leave the property or fight at the risk of incarceration. The Laws chose the latter. Racial zones precluded black families from buying or renting a house in white neighborhoods. The federal government enforced this by instituting prerequisites for federal mortgage lending and supported national housing agencies that did not want to see black families as their neighbors. As a result, the wealth gap between African Americans and whites widened.[199] The family's decision prompted a campaign to litigate against racial housing segregation that reached the Supreme Court. Initially, the NAACP advised the Laws to drop the case, but the family proceeded and eventually won their case. "We never decided to give up. We intended to fight the thing all the way through," said a family member.[200]

Despite this ruling, the LAPD did nothing to lessen the racial tension that was fermenting across the city. There were threats of bombing white people for renting to African Americans. A white family, the Goulds who lived in Venice Beach was intimidated for having a black man living in their home. One neighbor shouted, "Anyone who has a Negro living in his home should be bombed." The Goulds also received a barrage of threatening phone calls. One caller said, "You will be burned out in 72 hours."[201] In addition to these threats, white people living in Compton picketed when black families were moving into the area. When the families called the police to disperse the crowd, the police did not respond. It was not until the NAACP phoned the sheriff's department that white picketers finally left. If that was not enough, African American real estate

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[199] Louis Lee Woods, ""The Inevitable Products of Racial Segregation": Multigenerational Consequences of Exclusionary Housing Policies on African Americans, 1910-1960"" *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology* Vol. 77, Issue 3-4 May-September 2018, 967-1012.

[200] Lonnie G. Bunch "A Past Not Necessarily Prologue," 118.

[201] George M. O'Connor, "The Negro and the Police," 141.

agents were also arrested on "soliciting charges" when they attempted to list homes for sale in Compton to potential black buyers.[202] Around the same time, a cross-burning appeared on the lawn of an African American family named the Whites. The family's home was vandalized with a rock thrown into the living room window that came close to striking their infant daughter. The rock was wrapped with a note stating, "You're not wanted," signed the "KKK."[203] Yet, it was not the Ku Klux Klan that prevented African Americans from buying homes in white neighborhoods, but white-led neighborhood associations.

In the 1950s, Los Angeles had a plethora of racist neighborhood associations. With innocuous-sounding names, such as Neighborly Endeavor, The Loyal Neighbors Association, and the Steadfast Neighbors, these associations attempted to prevent black families from living in white neighborhoods. One such association, The America Plus Incorporation, produced propaganda proposing racial segregation shrouded in so-called American values by eliciting language like "Freedom of Choice" for individuals who wanted to live among other whites. The organizations presented their initiatives as a matter of American principles and individual liberty. The coupling of liberty with property became a cornerstone tenet for these associations and any infringement was considered un-American. As expected, for these associations, anything that was "un-American" was linked to Communism, including "race-mixing." This approach was exploited as a latent danger during the height of the Cold War Era. Though it was not illegal to distribute racist pamphlets that advocated for racial segregation, the LAPD never surveilled or labeled these neighborhood associations as domestic terrorist organizations.[204]

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[202] George M. O'Connor, "The Negro and the Police," 142.
[203] Ibid.
[204] Ibid., 90.

As more and more African Americans moved to Los Angeles, Parker began deploying officers to patrol the neighborhoods they lived in. He did not assign officers to protect African American citizens from white supremacists. Rather, he assigned officers to ensure that African Americans were confined to these neighborhoods. A byproduct of this was the creation of an invisible de facto color line; a black belt that ran from City Hall to Compton in a seventeen-mile stretch. In 1950, there were approximately 170,000 African American residents in Los Angeles. Ten years later, the number increased to 423,000. Residents were forced to live within this corridor. The city demographics were shifting, and city officials did everything in their power to maintain the racial status quo. For African Americans, the density was increasingly difficult to live under, which prompted many black citizens to seek homes in the suburbs. In a city where the African American population was rapidly increasing between 1950 and 1960, developers – Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and Veteran Affairs (VA) – refused to sell suburban houses to black buyers.[205] In 1955, two million homes were insured by the FHA and less than fifty thousand were allocated to African American families. During this era, building and loan associations did not approve loans to African Americans to buy their first houses.[206] According to the LAPD's 1950 *Annual Report*, the Central Division was one of the most densely populated areas. The overcrowded conditions would naturally urge families to move to an area with more room to grow. The total population of Los Angeles was 1,967,682, and the Central District had 227,325 people living here – 8.7%.[207] Though the population began reducing in 1957 in terms of density, Central Avenue was still among one of the most crowded populated areas concerning density per acre.[208]

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[205] "Jim Crow on Rise in L.A. Housing" *California Eagle*, January 28, 1960.
[206] George M. O'Connor, "The Negro and the Police," 170-171.
[207] Los Angeles Police Department, *Annual Report*, 1950.
[208] Los Angeles Police Department, *Annual Report*, 1957.

Twelve years after the Supreme Court ruled that racial housing segregation was unconstitutional, black Angelinos were still fighting for their housing rights. A hearing on the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights argued that Parker refused to enforce civil rights legislation based on fair housing rights for African Americans who wanted to purchase homes in the suburbs. During the hearing, the question of racial restrictions centered around the LAPD's inactions to enforce the law. Civil Rights organizations stated that the LAPD did not do enough to prosecute people who prohibited African Americans from purchasing houses in white neighborhoods. When Parker was questioned about the department's handling of unfair housing policies, he deflected the accusation by victimizing the LAPD instead. It was part of Parker's strategy whenever he felt the need to defend the LAPD's racism. "I seem to be the only witness intelligent enough to understand these issues," decried Parker. When three black witnesses – all of whom were engineers – testified that they attempted to purchase homes near their place of employment, they were not taken seriously by the LAPD. Mexican American city council member Edward Roybal, along with Frank Chuman of the Japanese Americans Citizens League, added that discriminatory practices were also felt in their communities.[209] Parker responded, "The fact that minorities have received intolerant and discriminatory treatment does not automatically lend justice to all of their demands."[210] Ten years into his tenure, Parker refused to alleviate the growing concerns of residential segregation in Los Angeles. Instead, he redirected the public's attention by targeting nonwhite communities using racial identity as a law enforcement tool to combat crime.

While Parker discussed the importance of having community cooperation with the police, the implication was that white people needed to support the LAPD no matter how egregious an

[209] "Jim Crow on Rise in L.A. Housing" *California Eagle*, January 28, 1960.
[210] O.W. Wilson, *Parker on Police*, 164.

allegation was made against the department. [211] The "police science" that was applied for gathering aggregated data was an important analytic for the LAPD, as was the collection of biometrics. Racial characteristics played a significant role to single out people of Mexican descent and African Americans for the LAPD. Parker understood the impact of racial discrimination and used it as a policing technique to target specific individuals as the city's racial demographics shifted. "At the present time, race, color, and creed are useful and tactical devices," he wrote. [212] When his critics challenged this policing method, he stated, "The demand that the police cease to consider race, color, and creed is an unrealistic demand." Continuing with, "Such demands are a form of discrimination against the public as a whole."[213] He belittled community leaders by arguing that discrimination was a two-way street in that his officers were also subjected to such discriminatory practices. For a man who was revered as a tough figure in police professionalism, he continuously complained about how the LAPD was always mistreated by social critics, the State Supreme Court, and city officials. "The police not only deal with the riddle of human behavior; they are themselves sometimes victims of it."[214] He added, "It seems it is always the poor policeman who is blamed!"[215] The victimization of the LAPD was a strategy that Parker employed to gain support. As such, LAPD officers rarely faced discipline for their misconduct. Rather, the narrative that being a police officer was a dangerous business began to surface and was accepted as fact. That discourse remains largely accepted today.[216]

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[211] Ibid., 200.
[212] William H. Parker, "The Police Role in Community Relations" 1956, 377.
[213] Ibid.
[214] O.W. Wilson, *Parker on Police*, 201.
[215] Ibid., 215.
[216] Alex S. Vitale, *The End of Policing* (London and New York: Verso Press, 2018), 32.

Chief Parker claimed the LAPD was unfairly persecuted. In Parker's view, people either supported the police or criminals. The "thin blue line" rhetoric was seemingly an innocuous enforcement pronouncement that attempted to reclaim the notion that police officers were public servants. It was a remarkable tactic insofar that it presented the LAPD as an institution grounded in integrity that absolved itself from accusations of violence and racism. Race was not presented as a central component in policing as was upholding the law through race-neutrality. The assertion that race is not considered when combating alleged crime is incongruous. Critical Race Theorist, Neil Gotanda challenges this notion. He argues, "While the social content of race has varied throughout American history, the practice of using race as a commonly recognized social divider has remained almost constant."[217] For Parker, the law operated on the ethics of being race-neutral or at the very least attempted to frame the LAPD in this way, as an impartial institution. Critical Race Theory challenges this fallacy, especially as the LAPD's data reveals how both black and brown people were policed during Parker's tenure. A closer look into the *Annual Reports* provide a glimpse into how a higher concentration of arrests in black and brown communities countered Parker's rhetoric. When religious leaders questioned the tactics of the LAPD, the chief fired back claiming that they were attempting to discredit him using the "big lie technique."[218] Individuals who broke the law, regardless of race, were criminals to Parker. Yet, African Americans and people of Mexican descent consistently led most offenses.[219] The *Annual Reports* show how nonwhite communities were criminalized, especially when reviewing the language. In the 1950 *Annual Report*, "Some criminologists think the regional variations are due primarily to the racial

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[217] Neil Gotanda, "A Critique of "Our Constitution is Color-Blind,"" *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings that Formed the Movement*, ed. Kimberlé Crenshaw, Neil Gotada, Gary Peller & Kendall Thomas, (New York: The New Press, 1995), 258.
[218] "Chief Parker Charges Ministers Use "Big Lie" Against Him" *California Eagle*, June 21, 1962.
[219] Los Angeles Police Department, *Annual Reports*, 1950-1966.

composition of the area" but provided no empirical studies to support the assertion.[220] That is, because there is no scientific or biological confirmation that links race to crime.

The use of racial statistics to determine the cause of crime is rooted in Fredrick Hoffman's legacy. Historian Khalil Gibran Muhammad explores how Hoffman attempted to justify criminality as a social condition inherently found among African Americans. The 1896 publication of *Race Traits and Tendencies of the American Negro* normalized the discourse that African Americans were prone to more criminal activity than their European counterparts by employing a nationwide analysis of black crime statistics. According to Muhammad, Hoffman's study focused on so-called "innate self-destructive tendencies of black people." The analysis left a lasting impression for future law enforcement agents who accepted the false and racist notion that black people had some sort of degenerative biological condition.[221] Race statistics became instrumental to policing. Parker used them to advocate for recruiting more white police officers, all the while ignoring the racism and violence perpetuated by his own officers.

Parker believed that race relations under his leadership were satisfactory. He maintained that the African American community and the LAPD did not have any serious racial issues. Parker compared Los Angeles to the Jim Crow South declaring that if he was a black person, he would have moved here. Though Parker ignored the racism well-founded within his department, he could no longer ignore the rising tension unfolding across the city. In 1962, when asked if there was a racial problem in Los Angeles, he answered, "It has been a problem, but I don't think it is a big problem as some might believe it to be. I don't want to mention any names here, but I have been told by leaders of two of our large minorities that, after close observation of our department's work

[220] Los Angeles Police Department, *Annual Report,* 1950, 23.
[221] Khalil Gibran Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blacknessm,"*35.

with the minority groups, they have found nothing they can criticize."[222] He added, "Frankly I am amazed at the relative lack of friction among the groups here and at the ability of Los Angeles to assimilate all groups."[223] He disregarded the racial tensions, which ultimately culminated in the Watts Rebellion of 1965. The rebellion forced Parker to confront the reality that had been simmering for the past decade and a half. For Parker, it was about maintaining an inauthentic representation where people coexisted harmoniously and denied that the LAPD enforced and deepened racial segregation.

The early sixties were a turning point for race relations in Los Angeles. In January of 1962, the *California Eagle* reported an incident that occurred in Venice Beach when police were called for a noise complaint at a house party. When the police arrived, there were only ten people at the scene. They attempted to arrest partygoers, which sparked protest. The LAPD claimed that the arrestees were carrying concealed weapons but provided no proof. The partygoers, who were all either in their late teens or early twenties, became incensed with the way the LAPD mishandled the investigation. They reacted by hurling objects at the police.[224] The official story was that partygoers interfered in police business when they moved in to arrest them. However, this was one example of how the LAPD miscalculated the situation. When the local chapter of the NAACP documented and presented numerous instances of the police misusing their legal authority, they were met with silence by the police commission. No action was taken to remedy the increasing complaints of police violence. One police commissioner, who was African American, Everette M. Porter, led the wall of silence.[225] He later reaffirmed his loyalty to the NAACP, but supported the

[222] Donald McDonald, "The Police" *Center for the Study of Democratic*, 16.
[223] Donald McDonald, "The Police" *Center for the Study of Democratic*, 17.
[224] "Six Charged with Rioting," *California Eagle*, January 4, 1962.
[225] "Attny Porter Affirms Loyalty to NAACP," *California Eagle*, March 15, 1962.

commission's protest by not taking any action to discipline police officers who were accused of violence. The LAPD took it one step further when they threatened to sue the NAACP for "false libelous" and demanded that the organization redact an article printed in the *Los Angeles Herald* that charged the department of regularly using violence.[226] The NAACP did not acquiesce to their demands and remained a critical organization on issues regarding police accountability. The NAACP informed the department that they would continue to rely on public testimony on matters concerning police violence.

Shot in Cold Blood

On April 27, 1962, the LAPD shot and killed an unarmed African American man named Ronald T. Stokes. He was twenty-nine and a member of the Los Angeles chapter of the Temple of Islam. The coroner ruled his death was caused by a bullet to the heart. The incident occurred when a scuffle broke out between the police and two men parked near a Muslim Temple on South Broadway. When locals began to witness another incident of police harassment, officers Tomlinson and Reynolds panicked and called the riot squad. Reinforcements arrived on the scene and began to shoot indiscriminately at the crowd without cause or justification. Witnesses said the police began to panic after realizing they were outnumbered. During the melee, the police wounded six black men. But the violence did not stop after Stokes was left on the pavement to bleed out. The police approached his unresponsive body and continued to beat him in front of scores of witnesses. Moreover, the six unarmed men who were also injured by the shots did not receive any medical attention for some forty-eight hours. The six men were eventually charged "with assault

[226] "NAACP Says no Reaction on Charges," *California Eagle*, March 22, 1962.

with intent to commit murder."[227] The provocation angered African American leaders across the country, including Minister Malcolm X. He said, "They shot them down in cold blood."[228] One man, a twenty-three old named Fred Jingles Jr., was rearrested and charged with "suspicion of murder." Though he was not shot, his lower teeth had been kicked in, as well as a busted lip that looked like a "piece of raw liver," according to Malcolm X.[229] The NAACP and the United Clergymen of Central Los Angeles called for police accountability, but their pleas fell on deaf ears.[230] The police claimed that the Muslim men were carrying weapons when the gunfire erupted, but no weapons were found at the scene or on the arrested individuals. The allegation was refuted by Malcolm X who stated that the men were forbidden to carry weapons because of their religious teachings. "They were unarmed," he insisted.[231] Nonetheless, the LAPD's official story claimed that their officers shot in self-defense regardless of providing evidence.

Indeed, statistical analysis was used as an excuse to deploy police in black neighborhoods, as was racial profiling. Police officers took a hostile stance against African Americans as more and more moved into the city. Part of the LAPD's official version of the incident maintained that they were questioning the two men in the car about stolen clothes when out of nowhere they were attacked. They claimed one police officer was shot while the other had his gun taken from his holster. When reinforcements arrived on the scene, the angry crowd began assaulting them, too, which led to shooting at the unarmed crowd. The men detained before the skirmish were pushed up against a wall and accused of stealing clothes when it was later revealed that they worked for a local dry cleaning delivery service. A LAPD officer attempted to pummel one of the accused with

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[227] "Shot in Cold Blood, says Muslim Leader," *California Eagle*, May 3, 1962.
[228] Ibid.
[229] "Wounded Muslims Accused of Murder," *California Eagle*, May 3, 1962.
[230] Joseph Woods, "The Progressives and the Police," 476.
[231] "Wounded Muslims Accused of Murder," *California Eagle*, May 3, 1962.

a flashlight when another man intervened.[232] This is when the scuffle turned into a shooting spree. Though this was not a massacre, it was still open season on African Americans. Stokes' murder only infuriated the African American community further when the LAPD refused to take any responsibility for their actions. The LAPD's ineptitude to improve race-relations only widened the social chasms in an already tense situation.

The situation was part of what Simone Browne calls "racializing surveillance." Public spaces are designed and shaped for white males who do not have to live in fear of harassment. Conversely, black males in public spaces operate in the gray zone. They occupy spaces of uncertainty and are subject to disciplinary actions at any given moment. Racializing surveillance brings unwanted attention, specifically from law enforcement. Some acts could be considered innocuous while other acts are perceived as threatening.[233] For the black delivery drivers, simply sitting in a parked car was an act that warranted harassment.

The murder sparked a public debate in the *California Eagle.* The newspaper asked community members what should be done about another violent incident provoked by the police. If the police were not going to conduct a proper investigation into the murder of Stokes, then racial conflict between black citizens and the police was more than likely to follow. The *California Eagle* tried to warn of an inevitable unrest.[234] When Parker victimized the LAPD in the Stokes' murder, he changed the direction of the debate by demanding that the County Grand Jury investigate the Islamic Temple members. He claimed that the Muslims were, "extremely dangerous" and "there has never been anything as brutal as this conflict." Malcolm X responded, "Are they going to investigate the KKK, the John Birchers, the white Christian churches, the lily white Elks and

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[232] Ibid.
[233] Simone Browne, *Dark Matter*, 17.
[234] *California Eagle*, May 3, 1962.

Masons and Chief Parker?"[235] Community leaders were tired of the police violence that saturated their community and began to pressure city officials to investigate the LAPD's violent tactics.[236] From this deadly altercation, Parker doubled patrols and attempted to instigate another confrontation by flexing police muscle.

The shooting brought much-needed attention to police brutality. Malcolm X stated that Parker was a police chief who was "drunk with power." He described Parker as, "intoxicated with his own power and has an obsession where Muslims are concerned. The same feelings he harbors towards the Muslims is extend to the entire Negro community and probably the Mexican Americans as well."[237] In a press conference following the shooting, Malcolm X held Parker directly responsible for the murder of Stokes and said that police harassment is what caused the unprovoked homicide. Malcolm X said the actions of the police stemmed from officers being "frightened" of the people that they were sworn to protect. Because of the shooting, police violence was framed by the *California Eagle* as the number one issue in the city. The issue taken up by the *Eagle* was not reflective of what other local media outlets were reporting. The *Eagle* was important because they amplified the African American voice in these matters, which went underreported by the local press like the *Los Angeles Times.* The *LA Times* had historically sided with the LAPD with its close ties that dated back to the early twentieth century.[238]

As inflammatory comments were made against the black population, the *California Eagle* attempted to quell the racial tension instigated by the LAPD's violence.[239] The *Eagle* charged

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[235] "Wounded Muslims Accused of Murder," *California Eagle*, May 3, 1962.
[236] "Wounded Muslims Accused of Murder," *California Eagle*, May 3, 1962.
[237] "Chief Parker Called 'Drunk with Power;' Muslims Supported" *California Eagle,* May 10, 1962.
[238] Edward J. Escobar, *Race, Police, and the Making of a Political Identity*, 99.
[239] "The Road to Understanding," *California Eagle,* May 17, 1962.

Parker with a lack of understanding the structural forces that preserved white supremacy. The *Eagle* invited Parker to discuss why African Americans were frustrated with the police. Parker responded with allegations that the African American community was recklessly attempting to instigate a confrontation. According to the *Eagle*, Parker wanted to lure African Americans into another conflict, but both the newspaper and community wanted Parker and the LAPD to openly discuss the conditions that led to the deadly confrontation. In doing so, Parker would have to accept an admission of guilt on the part of the LAPD, which he was not prepared to do. Rather than participating in a conversation to come up with a resolution and alleviate tension, the LAPD blamed the Muslim community for the altercation. This was echoed by the mayor's office in which there was hope that Sam Yorty would mediate a discussion between the LAPD and black community. Unfortunately, the public dialogue did not happen. The mounting frustration decried by the *Eagle* was essentially ignored by city officials. They published:

> Let us say it again: police-community relations can only be improved by an understanding in depth on both sides. They can only be worsened by saber rattling and the shaking of the big stick. Negroes can't be bullied into accepting discrimination. They are entirely willing, and eager to pursue a course which promises an ultimate end to ancient and outworn inequalities in housing, employment and in law enforcement. The road to understanding is a two-way street.[240]

No weapons or evidence of the wounded men attacking the police surfaced. The six men injured at the scene were cleared of all charges, while nine others were indicted.[241] The encounter resulted in the killing of one unarmed man, and six wounded, but more importantly, a police officer who was not charged with murder. The six wounded did not receive adequate or immediate medical care at the scene of the shooting. The officer who killed Stokes, William Tribble, evaded charges.

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[240] "The Road to Understanding," *California Eagle*, May 17, 1962.
[241] "6 Cleared by Jury; 9 Indicted," *California Eagle*, May 24, 1962.

Eyewitnesses were not asked to testify, and the murder was ruled as a "justifiable homicide."[242] The lack of police accountability was part of the normalization of police violence.

In 1965, the Governor's Commission on the Watts Uprisings issued a statement expressing Parker as a well-regarded competent police chief, but African American leaders felt that the statement was disingenuous, especially as many had been subjected to countless incidents of police misconduct.[243] The leaders described Parker as an anti-black racist and demanded that Mayor Sam Yorty investigate the extensive complaints of police violence normalized in black neighborhoods. Even as religious leaders urged the mayor to create a review board, Parker denied any allegations of police brutality.[244] In 1960, one million dollars' worth of misconduct claims were filed against the LAPD.[245] By 1964, 412 complaints of police violence were submitted while only forty-two were sustained, yielding a ten percent result that signaled the Internal Affairs Division did not thoroughly investigate allegations of misconduct.[246] Either they did not fully comply with their responsibilities to hold violent police officers accountable or chose to support their fellow officers by remaining idle. The racism that was found in the LAPD was only one part of the larger structures of state-sanctioned violence. The "protect and serve" motto was never extended to nonwhite communities. As Cheryl Harris contends on this exclusive membership that receives protection, "The fundamental precept of whiteness, the core of its values, is its exclusivity; but exclusivity is predicated on any intrinsic characteristic, but on the existence of the symbolic Other,

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[242] "Inquest Finds Stokes was Killed Legally, Shooting 'Justified,'" *California Eagle*, May 17, 1962.
[243] Governor's Commission on the Los Angeles Riots, Law Enforcement: The Thin Thread, 1965, *California History*, Vol. 92, Number 3, pp. 4–10.
[244] "Mayor Yorty Told Brutality Exists," *California Eagle*, June 14, 1962.
[245] Joe Domanick, *To Protect and Serve*, 1994, 162.
[246] Governor's Commission on the Los Angeles Riots, Law Enforcement: The Thin Thread, 1965, *California History*, Vol. 92, Number 3, pp. 4–10.

which functions to "create an illusion of unity" among whites."[247] African Americans increasingly grew disillusioned with the LAPD. The unity among the department signaled to African Americans that they were on their own.

African American editorials continued to report on the police violence experienced by their readers. Between 1963 and 1965, sixty African American Angelinos were murdered by the LAPD, twenty-seven of them were shot in the back.[248] These killing should have been a dire warning to the city, but because the mayor's office and LAPD worked in concert to implicate the black community, their pleas went unanswered. In 1964, both Parker and the Governor's Commission claimed, "over half of all crimes of violence committed in the City of Los Angeles are committed by Negroes."[249] The question is how a community can feel that they were being protected by the police when they were consistently criminalized in the public.

Racism and Discrimination within the LAPD

Parker maintained that African Americans enjoyed more privileges and freedom in Los Angeles than in most cities in the United States. For Parker, living in Los Angeles was perceived as progress because some became part of the black middle-class. The department went as far as to claim that hostilities toward the police were rapidly diminishing, and that the city was becoming more moderate in its attitude toward African Americans.[250] But when it came to racial progress within the department, black police officers did not receive promotions as their white counterparts

[247] Cheryl Harris, "Whiteness as Property," 290.
[248] Joe Domanick, *To Protect and to Serve,* 176.
[249] Governor's Commission on Los Angeles Riots, "Law Enforcement: The Thin Thread," 1965, 4 - 10.
[250] George M. O'Connor, "The Negro and Police in Los Angeles," 159.

did. Most, if not all, were assigned to patrol African American districts and were rarely sent on foot patrols into white neighborhoods. Many worked in the traffic division.[251] To promote African Americans to supervisory positions over white officers was out of the question. The same went for police officers of Mexican descent. Indeed, there were more high-ranking officers of Mexican descent than African Americans because they were bilingual, however, like African Americans, they only worked the Latino districts.[252]

When Parker took over the LAPD, his predecessor, William Worton, planned on racially integrating the department's black officers to high-ranking positions, but the plan was nearly abandoned.[253] In the late fifties, department integration had hardly changed. Future mayor and former LAPD officer, Tom Bradley, warned Parker that he needed to integrate black officers to ease the racial tensions in the department. Bradley's remarks were viewed as insubordinate. To Parker, Bradley betrayed the department because he ostensibly put the black community over the LAPD.[254] Parker refused to acknowledge that racial integration was unavoidable. With integration occurring in institutions like the military and public schools, it was certain that police departments would soon follow. Parker believed that civil rights groups were out to interfere with the power he wielded over the city, but African Americans and people of Mexican descent simply wanted to be treated with respect like their white counterparts.

Parker did not integrate the department for the first decade of his tenure. In 1961, Mayor Sam Yorty campaigned on integrating the LAPD, pressuring Parker to implement underlying changes to appear unbiased. It was only after his campaign pledge to integrate black and brown

[251] Ibid., 153.
[252] Joe Domanick, *To Protect and to Serve,* 139.
[253] Ibid., 102.
[254] Ibid., 166.

recruits that Parker was forced to reconsider the LAPD's [white] boys-only club. The LAPD was comprised of officers whom he said were either, "conservative, ultraconservative, or very right-wing."[255] African Americans were not assigned to any of the elite police units. There were only two black lieutenants during the early part of his tenure and none were promoted above the rank of captain.[256] It was only a matter of time before serious racial reforms were implemented. Civil Rights activists were becoming a formidable force contesting white supremacy and Los Angeles witnessed the demographic shifts that became home to many African Americans and people of Mexican descent. These racial and ethnic transformations may have helped Yorty get elected, but the city still belonged to Chief Parker.

Parker's unwillingness to denounce racism within his department hindered African American officers from receiving promotions. When Parker's wife asked an African American lieutenant after a police banquet why he had not made captain yet, he answered back, "I don't know, ask the chief."[257] African American police officers were viewed by the LAPD brass as sloppy professionals who held a different set of principles than their white counterparts. Equated with so-called black criminals, black officers did not receive the same respect as white officers.[258] James Foreman Jr. discusses this era of "white indifference." When it came to promoting black officers, the white power establishment worried about funneling power into the hands of black officers. Racial anxieties were exaggerated and used to stir fear that African American officers could exercise authority over white citizens, shifting the power dynamics. Most, if not all, were regulated to patrol black neighborhoods. Advocates believed that they would make better crime

[255] Ibid., 136.
[256] Joe Domanick, *To Protect and to Serve,* 167.
[257] Ibid.
[258] Ibid., 139.

fighters because they could gain the trust of the African American community.[259] Yet, questioning their intelligence as leaders was racialized, which presented obstacles for promotions.

Parker claimed, "an unmitigated falsehood" was made against him when questioned if black officers were confined to work in specific sections of the city.[260] In 1960, no black officer had made it above the rank of lieutenant. Furthermore, out of 4,800 LAPD officers, less than four percent were African American. When the Civil Rights Commission asked Parker why the dearth of high-ranking black officers, he answered that none could pass the examination needed to gain a promotion. "I say that none of them has passed since I have been chief."[261]

When questioned about black and white police officers working together, Parker deflected. He was grilled by George A. Beavers, chairman of the Housing Authority during the hearing as Parker denied that black and white officers were barred from working in pairs. Beavers asserted that the LAPD "follows an unwritten rule" that segregates officers based on race. Parker contested that the LAPD did not have an official policy that segregated officers from working at any police station they desired. Police officers, Parker claimed, had the right to choose who they wanted to work with. He claimed that black officers were assigned to certain stations because they wanted to work closer to home.[262]

When the Congress of Racial Equality asked Parker about his recruitment standards that brought white male southerners to Los Angeles, he claimed that only thirteen percent during the period between 1960 and 1963 were from the south. He refused to release the official numbers on

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[259] James Foreman Jr., *Locking Up our Own: Crime and Punishment in Black America* (New York: Farra, Straus and Giroux, 2017), 79.
[260] "Beavers' Charges False, Says Parker," *California Eagle*, January 28, 1960.
[261] Ibid.
[262] Ibid.

how many white southerners were actively working in the LAPD.[263] Speculation around these recruitment strategies have sparked many discussions for Angelinos over the years. These discussions have been on par with conspiracy theories, but for many, it seemed plausible considering the department's racist nature that permeated the social relations between the department and community. Still, locating the actual numbers of how many white southerners recruited from the Jim Crow south has proven to be a difficult endeavor. Nonetheless, it is conceivable for Parker, who espoused white supremacist beliefs, to recruit from the deep south during a period of increased migration to Los Angeles. At the hearing, Parker claimed that he learned at a conference for mayors that southern cities paid the fares of African Americans to relocate to Los Angeles.[264] Though no evidence was offered to support the claim, this did not hinder his efforts to spread misinformation.

Chief Parker was a skillful orator. His ability to arouse fear among the white population after the Watts Rebellion was remarkable.[265] He invoked racist tropes to gain support from whites.[266] In 1957, eight years before the Watts Rebellion, the Los Angeles chapter of the NAACP demanded that the city fire Parker. They argued his opposition to federal investigations would obstruct the progression of civil rights legislation supported by the Eisenhower administration. Though he publicly endorsed the bill, Parker also attacked the proposed legislation because it would provide a pathway for victims to push for more investigations into police misconduct at the federal level.[267] It threatened the autonomy of the department. Moreover, in 1958 the ACLU charged the LAPD with lawlessness. They presented statistics that showed that two of the eighty

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[263] Joseph Woods, "The Progressives and the Police," 478.
[264] "Beavers' Charges False, Says Parker," *California Eagle*, January 28, 1960.
[265] "Chief Parker Molded LAPD Image – Then Came the '60s" *Los Angeles Times*, May 25, 1992.
[266] Mina Yang, "The Thin Blue Line Down Central Avenue," 222.
[267] "NAACP Demands Parker's Ouster" *California Eagle*, February 14, 1957.

charges of police violence brought by clients resulted in investigations. Additionally, of the twenty-one civil rights violations, none were investigated. The department was well-protected by Parker refusing to comply with any sort of civil rights legislation. He declared that the program "would put the police out of business" and play directly into the hands of the Communists.[268] His obstruction reflected the dominance that he wielded as chief of the LAPD during the burgeoning civil rights movement, which frustrated community leaders.

Parker's arrogance suggests that he refused to consider the acts of violence that were committed by his department. Throughout his tenure, Parker never admitted that the LAPD was plagued with violence and racism. An admission of guilt would demonstrate weakness. Parker did not acquiesce to his critics, especially when he was questioned by civil rights activists. His policing methods targeted people of Mexican descent when the LAPD began to willfully cooperate with the Border Patrol under "Operation Wetback." The Border Patrol and LAPD were comprised of mostly white males who were hired to monitor people of color. Historian Kelly Lytle Hernández's *Migra* reveals how the creation of the Border Patrol in 1924 was used as a mechanism of social control by assigning officers to the US-Mexican border. Prior to the establishment of the Border Patrol, immigration officials focused on targeting undocumented European and Asian immigrants. After 1924, the government redirected its energy by placing more agents at the border to hinder Mexican nationals from entering.[269] The partnership between both federal and local law enforcement agencies were led by white men who wanted to stem the flow of Mexican nationals.

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[268] "Parker Hits Civil Rights Legislation: Law Enforcement may be Hampered, He Tells Officers." *Los Angeles Times (1923-1995)*, Feb 02, 1957. https://colorado.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/parker-hits-civil-rights-legislation/docview/167060781/se-2?accountid=14503.

[269] Kelly Lytle Hernández, *Migra: A History of the U.S. Border Patrol* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2010), 17 & 33.

Criminalizing People of Mexican Descent and Controlling Immigration

In 1924, the United States placed strict restrictions on immigration quotas that were largely based on "national origins." European immigrants from the Nordic countries were exempted from this quota system.[270] Moreover, no restrictions were placed on the Western Hemisphere, which allowed Mexican nationals to enter the country lawfully to work.[271] This was allowed because southwest growers lobbied to keep seasonal workers employed to harvest crops. Migrants were exploitable and cheap labor for growers. Immigration laws have functioned as a centrists and right-wing tool that uses race and nationality to distinguish who is deserving of living and working in the United States. But, by the mid-fifties, almost a decade after World War II was over, Mexican labor was not as valued as it was at the start of the war. Work-place raids began to increase, and the LAPD aided the federal government in expelling people of Mexican descent. Yet, during World War II, films depicted Mexican farmhands as a necessary endeavor to fight fascism overseas. The local press hailed the program as a success when workers were able to remit monies back to Mexico to improve their families' living standards.[272] This began to change by the time Parker became chief of the LAPD.[273]

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[270] James Q. Whitman, *Hitler's American Model: The United States and the Making of Nazi Race Law* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2017).
[271] Eric Foner, *Give Me Liberty! An American History Volume Two (*New York and London: Norton and Company Press, 2011), 782.
[272] Hillinger, Charles. "Bracero Program Aids both U.S. and Mexico: Imported Workers Took Back $35 Million to Improve Living Standards Last Year." *Los Angeles Times (1923-1995),* Aug 27, 1959.https://colorado.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/3racero-program-aids-both-u-s-mexico/docview/167552390/se-2?accountid=14503. (Accessed January 12, 2022).
[273] *Why Braceros?* Council of California Growers, 1962 C-Span.

To contextualize the era, the conditions that people of Mexican descent faced were grim when Parker took over. For Anglo Americans, people of Mexican descent represented, "an affront of Anglo ideals of racial purity" because they were of mixed-race. It was not so much their citizenship or lack thereof, but their ancestry that ignited fears that white supremacy would be challenged. As Critical Race Theorist Juan F. Perea points out, the United States Senate was concerned with race and language, as it played a role in limiting the political power of people Mexican descent.[274] Moreover, racial factors that separated whiteness from nonwhites determined who would be awarded protections from the federal government and local police. People of Mexican descent were valuable insofar as exploitable labor for the wealthy growers went, but also expendable.

Historical tension between the LAPD and people of Mexican descent has its antecedents in the first half of the twentieth century. Criminalizing Mexican youth in the 1940s weakened an already precarious relationship when Parker assumed command of the LAPD. The Sleepy Lagoon Case of 1942 shows how youth were criminalized when the police arrested and beat twenty-four young men alleging that they murdered another Mexican youth.[275] In the following year with the so-called Zoot Suit Riots, young people of Mexican descent clashed with military servicemen, but were the only ones arrested during the skirmishes.[276] In both cases, they were not given the same rights and legal protections as their white counterparts. The Sleepy Lagoon Case created hysteria among whites while zoot suiters were villainized as menacing.

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[274] Juan F. Perea, "Race and the U.S.-Mexican Border: Tracing the Trajectories of Conquest," *Critical Race Theory: The Cutting Edge*, ed. Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2013), 334.
[275] Ian F. Haney López, *Racism on Trial*, 73.
[276] Ibid.

When Parker spoke of an "invasion from within," the racially charged language coincided with African Americans and people of Mexican descent moving to Los Angeles. Indeed, Los Angeles had been the home to many people of Mexican descent for generations. But with the introduction of the Bracero Program, more and more immigrants began calling Los Angeles their home.[277] Los Angeles had the second largest population with Mexican ancestry outside of Mexico.[278] The Bracero Program was designed as a guest worker program between Mexico and the United States that operated between 1942 and 1964. In the span of these two decades, four million Mexicans traveled to the United States to look for work; most who toiled the fields were male. Though this was a joint effort between both countries, the Program mainly benefitted the United States. Many Mexican workers were subjected to a life of exploitation and racism when they arrived. To make matters worse, Chief Parker began to take notice of the demographic shifts and began assisting the Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) to remove people of Mexican descent.

As early as 1950, the LAPD believed that "marginal workers" caused many of the city's problems. The *Annual Reports* said, "They formed a new, and for a time, unassimilated element in the community."[279] State and city officials began to work together to detain and repatriate people of Mexican descent. According to Natalia Molina, people of Mexican descent culturally represented a class of criminals for law enforcement officials. The way language was used in local newspapers demonstrates how Mexicans were racially criminalized. The pejorative term that is still used today among racist and self-identified conservative pundits is "illegal," but the term "illegal" has its origins in bigoted terminologies, such as the word "wetback." The word "wetback"

[277] Natalia Molina, *How Race is Made in America,* 112.
[278] O.W. Wilson, *Parker on Police,* 151.
[279] Los Angeles Police Department, *Annual Reports,* 1950, 24.

is tied to Mexicans, or other Latina/o/x immigrants. Newspapers, such as the *Los Angeles Times* began producing stories of Mexicans as social burdens who needed to be deported immediately.[280] They employed disparaging language to depict people of Mexican descent as criminals. Moreover, they fabricated a drug pusher-victim binary narrative. In doing so, white women were painted as innocent victims in the early drug wars.[281] Such rhetorical classifications led to the criminalization of Mexican American youth, which shaped the public's consent to support the draconian methods employed by the LAPD. Today, the word, "wetback" is no longer circulated among mainstream newspapers, but the term "illegal" remains as part of the larger legacy that has promulgated the notion that Latina/o/x are inherently criminal and undeserving of protection from law enforcement.

In 1954, the INS launched "Operation Wetback" with the intention of deporting at least one million people of Mexican descent from the United States.[282] Citizenship status was disregarded.[283] The roundups weakened relations with the LAPD. In addition, the LAPD's history of crushing worker strikes in the agricultural industry was well-known among people of Mexican descent. Historian Edward Escobar's *Race, Police, and the Making of a Political Identity* outlines how the LAPD served the interest of the growers who worked as their private mercenary force. Growers called on various police departments to break up strikes and quell worker rebellions, including the LAPD. The LAPD continuously intervened on behalf of the growers regardless of if the conflict was outside of city limits.[284] This was nothing new because the LAPD has historically stood alongside powerful institutions like the *Los Angeles Times*.[285] The growers just represented

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[280] Natalia Molina, *How Race is Made in America,* 114.
[281] Matthew D. Lassiter, "Pushers, Victims, and the Lost Innocence of White Suburbia: California's War On Narcotics during the 1950s," *Journal of Urban History* Vol. 41 (5) 787-807.
[282] Natalia Molina, *How Race is Made in America,* 114.
[283] Ibid., 132.
[284] Edward J. Escobar, *Race, Police, and the Making of a Political Identity.* 55.
[285] Ibid, 49.

another wealthy institution that the LAPD protected. This cooperation resulted in labor repression while the LAPD refused to protect the workers who were exploited and racially criminalized.

Parker worked closely with the Border Patrol and permitted them to use his officers to sack people of Mexican descent. The merger between the LAPD and INS in the early 1950s worried the Mexican community. Parker, along with Mayor Yorty, reported to the United States Attorney General Herbert Brownell that people of Mexican descent were causing a considerable amount of social problems. The city leaders alleged that seventy-five percent of all crime committed was due to "aliens who entered the United States illegally."[286] It was an operation that led to raids at factories and agricultural farm sites. In June of 1954, the *Los Angeles Times* reported on a "wetback roundup." The article stated, "investigators swooped down in surprise visits to farms, industrial plants, businesses and factories reportedly using wetback labor." The raid led to the apprehension of 400 workers. The INS also threatened employers who were suspected of harboring workers.[287]

The disenfranchisement of Mexican people is comparable to other nonwhites living in Los Angeles. Cultural differences pushed many to the margins but made it possible to share similar experiencing of injustices rooted in violence and racism. Yet, other nonwhites, such as African Americans and Japanese Americans, understood that the police could easily turn their attention on them. Natalia Molina's racial scripts offer an understanding of how different racial groups in Los Angeles came to the aid of people of Mexican descent through coalition building. Relationally was significant because it showed solidarity. As these coalitions formed, they fought against an

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[286] Natalia Molina, *How Race is Made in America,* 127.

[287] "400 More Wetbacks Rounded Up: False Phone Tips Waste Time of Raiding Officers." *Los Angeles Times (1923-1995)*, Jun 19, 1954. https://colorado.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/400-more-wetbacks-rounded-up/docview/166640616/se-2?accountid=14503. Accessed January 12, 2022.

aggressive police-state apparatus that wanted to deport people of Mexican descent regardless of citizenship status. As such, the Los Angeles Committee for the Protection of the Foreign Born was an organization that recognized the predicament that all nonwhite communities faced if they did not challenge the deportation regime.[288] Personhood, as it relates to citizenship in the United States, functions as a form of political inclusion and as an important feature for exercising one's rights. Lisa Maria Cacho argues, "When the right to demand rights is imagined as an attribute or a property of U.S. citizenship, it emphasizes the "law" and "legal recognition" as the appropriate means for achieving social justice."[289] These groups understood the importance of connecting citizenship to race and the "legal" protections needed to combat the injustices carried out by the deportation regime – the powerful collaboration between federal and local forces.

Parker consorted with the federal government to remove people of Mexican descent from the interior. The three-way cooperation between Mayor Yorty, Attorney General Brownell, and Parker resulted in massive sweeps and deportations. In 1953, Brownell visited Los Angeles for a conference to discuss organized crime, narcotics, and undocumented workers. Parker noted that up until August of the same year, 5,942 "Mexican aliens" had been arrested. He went on to say that the previous year, the LAPD had arrested 4,502 people and would expect a 100% increase in the subsequent years. "We told the Attorney General that the Los Angeles Police Department is carrying functions that rightly [sic] to the Federal government connection with all three [sic] – the

[288] Natalia Molina, *How Race is Made in America,* 117.
[289] Lisa Maria Cacho, *Social Death: Racialized Rightlessness and the Criminalization of the Unprotected* (New York: New York University Press, 2012). 140.

wetbacks, organized crime and dope traffic," Parker stated.[290] Brownell responded by deploying 491 immigration officers to be stationed on the California-Arizona border. However, most of these officers were placed on the California side. It was the largest operation to date to deport undocumented immigrants in the southwest. Brownell made allegations that unknown subversives were entering the United States through the Mexican border.[291] Such claims reinforced Parker's accusations that an influx of criminals were invading the United States and that only the police could stop this incursion. Moreover, Brownell announced that an "average 75,000 a month, and steadily increasing" undocumented Mexicans were crossing the border circumventing the Bracero Program's guest-worker agreement. He added, "They are heading for our industrial centers to obtain employment in defense plants and other industries. Both in agriculture and industry, they displace domestic workers, adversely affecting working conditions, contributing to an increased crime rate and spreading disease."[292] Currently, Republican lawmakers are falsely claiming that Latina/o/x immigrants are carrying the COVID-19 virus and are spreading it within the borders of the United States.[293] No evidence supports this, but rhetoric is nonetheless weaponized to depict Latina/o/x immigrants as carriers of the virus. The racial chasms among work sites are also worth noting because the rhetoric spewed by Brownell reveals how such divide and conquer tactics were

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[290] "Brownell Pledges Wetbacks Action: Attorney General Says U.S. Will Seek Quick Solution of Mexican Alien Problem Brownell Visit." *Los Angeles Times (1923-1995)*, Aug 16, 1953, https://colorado.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.colorado.idm.oclc.org/historical-newspapers/brownell-pledges-wetbacks-action/docview/166504319/se-2?accountid=14503 (Accessed March 18, 2021).

[291] "Government Maps War on Wetbacks: 491 Additional Immigration Men to Join in Mass Roundup of Aliens." *Los Angeles Times (1923-1995)*, Jun 10, 1954. https://colorado.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.colorado.idm.oclc.org/historical-newspapers/government-maps-war-on-wetbacks/docview/166627156/se-2?accountid=14503 (Accessed June 10, 1954).

[292] "Ibid.

[293] https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/fact-check-are-covid-positive-migrants-allowed-to-cross-southern-border-into-us/ar-BB1ehZmr.

deployed to break up worker solidarity by evoking nationalism. In doing so, fictitious representations of foreign invaders framed people of Mexican descent as undeserving of legal protections and citizenship.

Public safety was framed as an issue of social control. Together, the LAPD and INS became a military arm of repression that prevented people of Mexican descent from contributing to American society. Such tactics stretched the social fissures that reduced immigrant rights. People of Mexican descent were punished for their lack of status and stereotyped as criminals, which made them easier to identify. Cacho explains, "Because it is people's noncitizenship status, not their crimes, that marks them as undeserving of sympathy and second chances, noncitizens are also defined as being far beyond the presumed ethical obligations of the US government and its citizenry."[294] The stereotype of criminality associated with race and citizenship persists today.

The social divisions that emerged in the fifties shaped the blueprint for today's right-wing rhetoric against Latina/o/x immigrants. The Bracero Program was a racialized project since immigrant restrictions were placed on people of Mexican descent as expendable labor. They were an agricultural workforce that could be removed. Yet, the importance here is to scrutinize the social conditions that confronted this population through sheer force and criminalization via the LAPD, INS, and local press. By and large, Braceros were Mexican nationals situated into subordinate positions, which meant legal protections from the state and law enforcement were non-existent. Cacho discusses how being stereotyped as a criminal misrecognizes populations as underserving of universal rights.[295] The notion that Braceros living in the United States unauthorized without contracts produced these stereotypes as people breaking the law. Such stereotypes were reproduced

[294] Lisa Maria Cacho, *Social Death*, 95.
[295] Ibid., 4.

by local newspapers like the *Los Angeles Times,* which supported the LAPD's claims that Braceros and people of Mexican descent were inherently criminals.[296]

In Los Angeles, city officials began implementing structural changes to deport undocumented Mexican migrants. One such measure barred employers from hiring unauthorized Braceros as their farmhands.[297] This mode of prohibition relied on a deportation regime that was aided by local newspapers. The *Los Angeles Times* printed racist stories that constructed immigrants as criminals and the white public accepted the indictment as truth. During this process, the LAPD carried out orders to detain and remove people who appeared "Mexican." Apprehensions of Mexican nationals peaked during this time and would not again until the decades of the 1970s and 1980s.[298] One headline from the *Los Angeles Times* printed in the summer of 1953 read, "Brownell Pledges Wetbacks Action."[299] A polarizing headline from a newspaper with wide circulation could induce more harm than good for Mexicans living in the United States. But the *Los Angeles Times*, along with the LAPD and the Border Patrol, worked together to deport people of Mexican descent.

In a speech given at the Annual Conference of the International Association of Chiefs of Police in 1952, Parker proclaimed, "The early Caucasians who settled North America came here

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[296] "Brownell Pledges Wetbacks Action: Attorney General Says U.S. Will Seek Quick Solution of Mexican Alien Problem Brownell Visit." *Los Angeles Times (1923-1995),* Aug 16, 1953, https://colorado.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.colorado.idm.oclc.org/historical-newspapers/brownell-pledges-wetbacks-action/docview/166504319/se-2?accountid=14503 (accessed March 18, 2021).

[297] Natalia Molina, *How Race is Made in America*, 127.

[298] Ana Raquel Minian, *Undocumented Lives: The Untold Story of Mexican Migration* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2018), 3.

[299] "Brownell Pledges Wetbacks Action: Attorney General Says U.S. Will Seek Quick Solution of Mexican Alien Problem Brownell Visit." *Los Angeles Times (1923-1995),* Aug 16, 1953, https://colorado.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.colorado.idm.oclc.org/historical-newspapers/brownell-pledges-wetbacks-action/docview/166504319/se-2?accountid=14503 (Accessed March 18, 2021).

primarily from Europe where they were unhappy under governments they believed to be tyrannical. These resilient pioneers carved out of a wilderness the greatest nation in all of history and provided for us the highest level of economy the world has ever seen."[300] In his view, the United States was a white nation for white people. He added, "Finally, the last frontier reached the Pacific Ocean. I gravely doubt that anyone here tonight is anxious to establish a homestead in Korea."[301] These statements embody what Parker thought of nonwhite communities. African Americans and people of Mexican descent were subjected to a system of social control, enduring police repression, and harassment that paralleled an occupying paramilitary force. When questioned about how police could act as a great danger to the community, he responded by saying, "I foresee no danger that police activity will be an instrument of tyranny. The people would not stand for it; the city government would stand for it; the press would stand for it; and the police themselves, since they are citizens first and policemen second, would not stand for it"[302] But they [whites] did stand for this type of police activity as the culmination of such tyrannical acts finally reached its breaking point in the 1960s. If the LAPD conducted its brutal campaigns outside their communities, then the general white public remained silent on human rights issues.

Policing Race

As early as the fifties, academics began publishing examples of police oppression. In these publications, people of Mexican descent and African Americans expressed little confidence in the

[300] O.W. Wilson, *Parker on Police*, 29.
[301] Ibid., 30.
[302] Ibid., 101.

police.[303] The endless harassment reduced the likelihood that these communities could rely on the LAPD to lessen the racial tensions unfolding across the city. The combination of housing segregation, high cost of living, lack of upward social mobility in employment and education, and police brutality fueled their anger. Many nonwhites felt that they were purposely placed in inferior social positions and the LAPD maliciously participated in their oppression.[304] But the LAPD began to release new policing and racial guidelines that were thought to temper the growing racial animosity. However, the manual was created to silence their critics. By presenting the department as an institution that cared about improving social relations, they eschewed from taking responsibility for the conditions they created.

In 1952, Parker needed to rethink the department's poor race relations record. The curriculum for police training was revamped for recruits because several cases of police violence were reported across the city. As a result, the LAPD outlined policy recommendations to alleviate the racial tension. Recruits needed to consider socioeconomic factors, the danger of provoking violence, and building trust with the community. Moreover, officers learned to prevent largescale uprisings by paying attention to damaged property in neighborhoods. Notably, this sounded similar to the broken windows theory used today by police departments. The theory states, "failure to indicate care and maintenance will unleash people's latent destructive tendencies."[305] In doing so, police officers were required to remain impartial as a professional courtesy. One such recommendation in the manual was not to employ derogatory language, such as "Nigger," "Kiki," "Wop," "Cholo," "Chink," "Chili Picker," "Jap," and "Dirty."[306]

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[303] George O'Conner, "The Negro and the Police," 208.
[304] Ibid., 88.
[305] Alex S. Vitale, *The End of Policing,* 5.
[306] George O'Conner, "The Negro and the Police," 228.

Though the curriculum was meant to promote better relations between the LAPD and the growing population of African Americans and people of Mexican descent, racial discrimination persisted. The manual instructed police recruits not to treat nonwhite people as inferior due to their supposed sensitive nature, which lead to "often develop strong protective reactions."[307] The curriculum categorized stereotypes with "Types of Minority Group Behavior." Examples included, "Negroes and Mexican-Americans--aggressive reaction to discrimination. Chinese--withdraw into themselves. Japanese and Jews--aggressive through competition. Fear and distrust of police--resentment to police in general by all." This was intended to teach recruits how to respond to hostilities from the aforementioned communities. Such racial classifications were meant to differentiate behavioral patterns, especially intelligence. Intelligence was linked to cultural heritage depending on where one was born and raised in the United States. For example, northern African Americans were considered more intelligent than southern whites. This was the only sample that was provided in the training manual in measuring intelligence.[308] The manual emphasized a person's social location as the cause of one's frustration in society. It ignored the social conditions created by the police and focused on scarce resources as the cause for discontent. Even though the LAPD added this to their curriculum, Mayor Yorty refused to actively pursue antipoverty grants, fearing that the federal government could interfere with the city's affairs. In fact, the city had a terrible reputation among federal bureaucrats who wanted to help the city before and after the Watts Rebellion of 1965.[309]

For the LAPD, competition for housing, jobs, and education led to increased resentment. Scarce resources began to sow the seeds of mistrust. If the LAPD truly believed in what they

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[307] George O'Conner, "The Negro and the Police," 228.
[308] Ibid., 231.
[309] Raphael J. Soneshein, *Politics in Black and White,*71.

printed in their training manuals, then the people they presumably protected felt otherwise. What is more, these communities felt detached from the rest of the city. It became increasingly difficult for police officers to build partnerships with these communities when Parker viewed them as a social burden. Parker stated in an interview, "In the first place a great number of those people came from areas in the country where they were much further dislocated much more seriously dislocated than they are here." He added, "They came in and flooded a community that wasn't prepared to meet them. Despite the fact that we got all this relief money going in there. We didn't ask these people to come here and suddenly they want our total community to adjust itself to a small segment that has suddenly commanded and taken over a section."[310]

Like the bombing in the West Adams district discussed at the beginning of the chapter, the city was left smoldering due to Parker's negligence in 1965. So-called policing race experts advised Parker of the circumstances that divided African Americans and people of Mexican descent from the LAPD. Throughout his career, Parker presented himself as an omniscient police chief who characterized his department as the victims of discrimination and prejudice. When he died, the city was still recuperating from the wreckage caused by the LAPD's ineptitude to understanding race and class relations. Civil rights leaders forewarned city leaders of the inevitability of racial violence because of the way the LAPD had historically brutalized African Americans and people of Mexican descent. We can posit that Parker's vanity and racism filled people with anger. The LAPD continued its brutal campaigns well after his death in 1966. Discrimination, social injustice, and violence became synonymous with Parker and the LAPD as time went on. After the Watts Rebellion, people no longer sat idly by. The younger generation

[310] Is this Really Who the LAPD Wants to Name Its New Building After? Accessed https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N2yFsx5vCLU (Accessed March 24, 2021).

began organizing themselves into political and social groups to counter the LAPD's militarized aggression. Without question, the department's violent legacy spurred young people to rebel against an unjust criminal legal system.[311]

[311] Ian F. Haney López, *Racism on Trial*, 178.

Chapter Four: "Combating Communism in the 'White Spot: Parker, Fascism, and the Cold War Ordinances"

Background

In 1947, the House of Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) was formed to target people who had radical ideals or membership in leftist organizations. This included membership in the Communist Party of the United States (CPUSA). In Hollywood, production workers and actors were blacklisted for their leftist political views, which prevented them from gaining meaningful employment within the film industry. It was a clear example of how divide and conquer politics operated, signaling to the rest if the country that being associated with left-wing politics could result in being ostracized. During this, the so-called Hollywood Ten were villainized for refusing to cooperate with the HUAC. In the aftermath, the Ten were charged with contempt and sent to prison for one year for not divulging the names of other leftists.[312] This case gives us insight into the charged political climate of the time. Having ties with leftist organizations that sought to empower workers could prevent people from gaining employment and could be grounds for deportation.[313] Association with leftist political parties also meant people could be placed under surveillance by the authority of the police. For this to happen, local newspapers needed to intensify the official discourse to criminalize people as unrecognizable figures to Americans. They, however, become recognizable as foreign and criminal. Cacho helps to clarify this by discussing

[312] *The Hollywood Ten,* 1950, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=taancRcLQ8o Accessed on YouTube (Accessed October 11, 2021.
[313] Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 (The McCarren-Walter Act) https://immigrationhistory.org/item/immigration-and-nationality-act-the-mccarran-walter-act/.

how perceived conceptions of people are constructed by placing stereotypes on people. They are criminalized and regarded as right-less in what she calls "transparent recognition."

Because class antagonisms were delineated on a foundation of worker empowerment and struggle, political aspirations for leftists were framed as subversive by the police and local press. Right-wing institutions questioned people's fealty to the United States during the Cold War. They presented class struggle as unpatriotic and associated with foreign ideologies. The foreign aspect became situated as un-American and intertwined with race, ethnicity, and nationality. In Los Angeles, left-wing political ideologies that deviated from the standard norms of American patriotism were portrayed as treasonous.

Michael Omni and Howard Winant discuss how nationhood is closely related to race and class in the United States. What is useful about their theory of racial formation is how the process is mutable in the political realm. Racial formation benefits dominant racial groups in power – white people. They also argue that Marxists have had a difficult time explaining racial dynamics to the "national question."[314] Indeed, the relations of production have alienated nonwhite workers in the United States. Though Marx did not provide an adequate discussion on how race and class are connected, Cedric Robinson's *Black Marxism* did provide an analysis to understand how deep-rooted ideology like racism shaped the perception of inferior social positions in the development of capitalist relations. Robinson explains, "As a material force, then, it could be expected that racialism would inevitably permeate the social structures emergent from Capitalism."[315] The limitations of Marxism created other ways to think about how race and class, in the United States, are inextricably linked. Moreover, political scientist, Alfonso Gonzales, argues that honorary

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[314] Michael Omni and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*, 91.
[315] Cedric Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1983), 2.

whites, in the Latina/o/x community, allows membership into whiteness that affords them legal protections in the form of law enforcement. However, this is premised on ideas of assimilation into the social structure of American patriotism and capitalism, which simultaneously means that one must reject left-wing politics to be seen as an American.[316]

Exploitation and white supremacy are important features in capitalism. Workers who challenged this system became criminalized because the power structure saw them as a threat.[317] Nonwhite people have also been tied to this struggle. The previous chapter discussed the agricultural strikes and how workers contested the power of the growers. It also discussed how the LAPD intervened to criminalize them. Radical leaders in nonwhite communities understood how capitalism worked for the dominant group in government, media, and law enforcement. They were forced on their heels by an overwhelming system of control built by capitalism and supported by white supremacy. For a comprehensive understanding of this history in Los Angeles, this chapter focuses on the jingoism in Los Angeles, the organizing efforts of the Civil Rights Movement and how they were maligned by Parker and the local press, and the fascist groups who endorsed Parker. Civil Rights activists were associated with Communists, which led to an atmosphere of fear created under the auspices of patriotism. They were mischaracterized as "unlawful" making it more digestible for the public to associate them as traitorous.[318] This was an important, albeit ruthless feature to criminalizing people, who did not adhere to capitalism and white supremacy.

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[316] Alfonso Gonzales, *Reform Without Justice: Latino Migrant Politics and the Homeland Security State* (Oxford: University Press, 2014), 157.
[317] Michael Omni and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*, 137.
[318] Lisa Marie Cacho, *Social Death*, 9.

Patriotism during the Cold War

In 1952, the United States Congress passed the Immigration and Nationality Act, also known as the McCarran-Walter Act. The new directive was an attempt to reform the United States' immigration laws to retain a portion of the nationality quotas created by the National Origins Act of 1924 that favored Nordic Europeans.[319] In the early fifties, immigration law was a matter of internal national security. It was the advent of the Cold War, and the former Soviet Union was presented as an imminent threat to the United States. The Red Scare, as it was called, was weaponized to investigate individuals associated with leftists or radical ideals. Forming a political party based on Communism became illegal in cities like Los Angeles and the constitutional protections of the First Amendment were ignored by their right-wing opponents. The organizations that struggled to improve the working and living conditions of working-class and people of color were likewise criminalized. As such, the LAPD became a powerful adversary against civil rights groups and labeled them political subversives controlled by the Soviet Union.[320] Though no evidence emerged to support this claim, organizations that challenged the authority of the LAPD became labeled as seditious and un-American.

Political views became the main issue for the McCarran-Walter Act. The Act stipulated that any persons involved in Anarchist, Socialist, or Communist organizing could be prosecuted to the full extent of the law for allegedly being a part of a subversive plot to overthrow the United States government. The Act upheld that a naturalized immigrant could be stripped of their citizenship and immediately deported if found guilty of being part of a seditious conspiracy. The

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[319] https://immigrationhistory.org/item/immigration-and-nationality-act-the-mccarran-walter-act/.
[320] Frank Donner, *Protectors of Privilege: Red Squads and Police Repression in Urban America,* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford: University of California Press, 1990), 250.

meaning of a seditious conspiracy depended on the arbitrary interpretation of the United States government. Immigrants who affiliated with leftist organizations that attempted to educate people on worker exploitation or American imperialism were considered to be part of a "totalitarian party of the United States."[321] In other words, if a leftist immigrant who spoke of horrible working conditions and proposed Socialism as a solution to combat capitalism, then they could be subjected to deportation. While the new law no longer denied immigrants from gaining citizenship or naturalization based on race or gender, political views replaced the previous merits. For the United States, to espouse political leanings associated with Socialism meant being an ally of the Soviet Union. This produced right-wing ideals cloaked in American nationalism and white supremacy.

Conservatives who held positions of power were not prepared nor ready to relinquish their status.[322] In fact, they were committed to waging an assault on Los Angeles leftists. City councilmembers, like Ed J. Davenport, a right-wing politician, advocated for outlawing the Communist Party. Davenport proposed registering members of the Communist Party and their supporters with the LAPD.[323] The goal was to isolate the Left from gaining political legitimacy in the city. To achieve this, city officials like Davenport needed the support of the LAPD to delegitimize Communism. Right-wing politicians and the police combined their forces to eradicate leftists living in the city. Communism became transparently recognized as criminal and foreign to

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[321] Immigration and Nationality Act Chapter 1—Quota System Numerical Limitations; Annual Quota Based Upon National Origin; Minimum Quotas https://immigrationhistory.org/item/immigration-and-nationality-act-the-mccarran-walter-act/.
[322] Bell Jr, Derrick A. "Brown V. Board of Education and The Interest Convergence Dilemma *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings that Formed the Movement*, ed. Kimberlé Crenshaw, Neil Gotada, Gary Peller & Kendall Thomas, (New York: The New Press, 1995), 20.
[323] Don Parson, "The Darling of the Town's Neo-Fascists: The Bombastic Political Career of Councilman Ed J. Davenport," *Southern California Quarterly,* Vol 81, No. 4 (Winter 1999), pp. 467-505.

American ideals.[324] Yet, these politicians refused to acknowledge the material conditions that led to people embracing Marxism. As this political process developed, turmoil between workers and the police began to worsen. The conflict between both groups can be traced back to the rise of the Industrial Revolution when social relations developed unevenly under capitalism to control workers and crush their efforts.[325] Police departments around the country were committed to advancing a right-wing ideology at the behest of capitalist interests and the LAPD participated in suppressing dissent. This collaboration can be traced as far back as the 1920s.[326]

Red Squads and the Merchants and Manufacturers Association

The Red Squads were an important policing tool of the 1920s and 1930s. They were used as strikebreakers and became an integral part of the state apparatus that worked in conjunction with the business elites to thwart the rise of Communism in the United States. As early as the 1930s, workers engaged in class struggle by organizing themselves into a formidable political force. Their goal was to transform United States society from one that served the interests of the capitalist elites to dismantling a system that historically exploited workers. A quarter of the country's workforce was unemployed and began recognizing that capitalism was structured to preclude them from gaining political and economic power.[327] If the LAPD was going to protect the public from dangerous criminals, it was the unions and workers that were characterized as such. Former LAPD chief, James Davis, compared unions, like the International Workers of the

[324] Lisa Marie Cacho, *Social Death*, 9.
[325] Sidney L. Harring, *Policing a Class Society: The Experience of American Cities 1986-1915* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2017), 28.
[326] Frank Donner, *Protectors of Privilege,* 245.
[327] Joe Domanick, *To Protect and to Serve,* 66.

World (IWW), to subversives, drunks, and vagrants living in the city. The Los Angeles chapter of the ACLU described Davis' Red Squad as, "the most lawless and brutal" in the United States.[328] The Red Squads proved their usefulness to the city's capitalists and began to shape the violent character of the LAPD. Yet, media advancing the narrative that leftists were criminals proved just as useful to identify them.

Los Angeles was governed by powerful white right-wingers. The Merchants and Manufacturers Association (M&M) and the Better America Federation in Los Angeles wanted labor unions quashed and tasked the LAPD to carry out their dirty work. Members of the association included co-owners of the *Los Angele Times,* Harrison Gray Otis and Harry Chandler. Together, they became wealthy and controlled the flow of the city's capital. They carved out Los Angeles and created a corridor from downtown to the seaports in San Pedro to receive and control imported goods and products. These wealthy men also established the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce to strengthen their power grip.[329] Their wealth was reflected by the large swaths of land they owned throughout the city. Moreover, Otis and Chandler sat on boards of over fifty corporations to watch over the affairs of the city.[330] Today, they are revered as the architects who built the city, but to workers, they represented greed and despotism. If conflict arose between unions and their businesses, the LAPD was called in to act as their private mercenary force and criminalized workers in the process. Cacho argues that criminalizing populations renders them right-less stating, "Criminalization justifies people's ineligibility to personhood because it takes away the right to have rights."[331] But as Los Angeles grew, the industrialists began to view San

[328] Joe Domanick, *To Protect and to Serve*, 23.
[329] Edward J. Escobar, *Race Police, and the Making of a Political Identity*, 23.
[330] Joe Domanick, *To Protect and to Serve,* 51.
[331] Lisa Marie Cacho, *Social Death*, 8.

Francisco as the city's main competition. To compete with San Francisco, Otis and Chandler began undercutting wages by sabotaging unions. They utilized the LAPD to infiltrate unions like the IWW.[332] In the early twentieth century, Los Angeles, along with San Francisco, were two major left-wing strongholds in California.[333] Efforts to organize at the docks were met with violent repression, especially as the bombing of the *Los Angeles Times* building set off by Anarchists remained a recent memory for both the LAPD and owners of the paper.[334]

The IWW wanted to expose capitalism, but they encountered fierce resistance from Otis, Chandler, and the conservative leadership of Los Angeles. Instead of addressing worker grievances, they used the LAPD to spy on the IWW by planting an undercover agent named William F. "Red" Hynes. He was an agent provocateur who joined the Communist Party as part of his cover. The intelligence bureau in the department monitored the whereabouts of known Communists along with the literature they published to educate disgruntled workers.[335] In 1923, when a critical strike transpired in the ports of San Pedro in south Los Angeles, workers demanded higher pay. Hynes worked his way to becoming the secretary of the strike committee. He testified against the unions in an attempt to discredit the movement, which produced paranoia among the union workers.[336] No evidence surfaced implicating the union for committing any crime of sedition except for being labeled as "Red Agitators." Leaders were rounded-up and arrested on trumped-

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[332] Peter Cole, et al, "Introduction" *Wobblies of the World: A Global History of the IWW* (London: Pluto Books), 1.
[333] Ibid., 75.
[334] Ibid., 47.
[335] "Sid Bush Held as Vagrant: Accused Red Agent Taken at Union Labor Convention Detained as Green Makes Statement Asserted Red Agent Held." (1927, Oct 07). *Los Angeles Times (1923-1995)* Retrieved from https://colorado.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.colorado.idm.oclc.org/historical-newspapers/sid-bush-held-as-vagrant/docview/162108423/se-2?accountid=14503.
[336] Joe Domanick, *To Protect and to Serve,* 63.

up charges of vagrancy.[337] Officer Hynes surveilled the union leaders and became a legendary strikebreaker among his LAPD associates. Moreover, the business elites successfully enacted statutes that outlawed protesting, including the "Red Flag Law," which made it a felony to display a red flag publicaly.[338] Jingoism also became a weapon against labor unions. These businessmen, along with the support of a violent police department, used patriotism to eliminate their political opposition. Anything that was needed to undermine the Left movement, the political interests of M&M overshadowed the demands of workers. Because their interests were protected by the LAPD, the department became a private paramilitary wing for the capitalists that criminalized dissent. Such paramilitary forces were the antecedents of the LAPD that Parker would use in the future.

These infiltration methods became part of the regulatory standards of policing. A powerful police state emerged as infiltration became an integral part of the surveillance state. The threat of being prosecuted induced paranoia among workers. The risk of prosecution for being a union member gave the police and capitalists an advantage over workers. The question however, is how did they manage to deter workers from joining unions? Simone Browne is useful here to understand how the security state operates as an invisible and unverifiable position that leads people to self-monitoring. Browne employs the panopticon as a concept to theorize surveillance. There is no privacy for individuals, or in this case, workers, which leads to self-regulation. If placed under this method of social control – especially by spreading fear – people began to worry that

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[337] "Sid Bush Held as Vagrant: Accused Red Agent Taken at Union Labor Convention Detained as Green Makes Statement Asserted Red Agent Held." (1927, Oct 07). *Los Angeles Times (1923-1995)* Retrieved from https://colorado.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.colorado.idm.oclc.org/historical-newspapers/sid-bush-held-as-vagrant/docview/162108423/se-2?accountid=14503.

[338] Joe Domanick, *To Protect and to Serve,* 38.

they could be watched by the police. Their free-will is taken away and individuals become recognized as dangerous and threatening to the power structures. Thus, it produced anxiety among people who believe they are under surveillance all the time.[339]

In addition to the LAPD being used as a personal police department for the conservative leadership, the *Los Angeles Times* was their political organ. The local newspaper spewed anti-labor rhetoric that promoted the political interests of the right-wing. During the better half of the twentieth century, Los Angeles was a homogenous city comprised of white Protestants who were not accepting of people of Mexican descent and African Americans.[340] Southern California was becoming a hub for radical organizing and the power structure saw this as a threat. In San Diego, red-baiting and anti-union rhetoric questioned the loyalty of people of Mexican descent by threatening to deport anyone with membership in leftist organizations.[341] The *Times* published articles that alleged Communists were plotting to takeover labor unions. They claimed that they were being controlled by the Soviet Union. According to Attorney-General Harry M. Daugherty, "Many of the leaders of this movement are American citizens. Though they are subject to orders from Moscow as to their action and activities in the United States."[342] The *Times* warned their readers that any involvement in organized labor and Socialism could be subject to arrest. "Calling attention that activities of the Federal government in dealing with "ultraradicalism" are limited by law to aliens, Mr. Daugherty notes that virtually all of the States now have enacted laws defining

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[339] Simone Browne, *Dark Matters*, 32-38.
[340] Edward J. Escobar, *Race Police, and the Making of a Political Identity*," 23.
[341] Jimmy Patiño, *Raza Si, Migra No: Chicano Movement Struggles for Immigrant Rights in San Diego*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 33.
[342] "Radicals in America Gain.: Communists are Busy, Says Attorney-General; Seek to Gain Control of Labor Unions; Government is Informed of Activities. 1921." *Los Angeles Times (1886-1922)*, Dec 09, 1921. https://colorado.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.colorado.idm.oclc.org/historical-newspapers/radicals-america-gain/docview/161117599/se-2?accountid=14503 (Accessed July 10, 2021).

and punishing criminal syndicalism and anarchy. These laws reach the citizen as well as the alien."[343] Three years later Daugherty would be brought up on corruption charges for profiting from alcohol sales when the Eighteenth Amendment was still a federal law. What "ultraradicalism" entailed was left to the discretion of the reader, but one can discern that joining the Communist Party could place you under surveillance. Moreover, the *Times* was strategically introducing right-wing ideals to its readership by conflating subversives with immigrants who did not adhere to American principles of patriotism and capitalism. By controlling the discourse, capitalists ignored people's grim material conditions. The *Times* framed the narrative that workers were neither exploited nor frustrated with the economy that favored the wealthy. Rather, radical workers were influenced by foreign forces who wanted to topple the United States government. It was a strategy in the Cold War era to frame "foreigners" or outside forces as the cause of rabble-rousing. Globally, immigrants recognized that the principles of capitalism did not work to support their struggle for economic equity. International cooperation threatened capitalism and became influential among the proletariat in Los Angeles. The United States government and conservative leadership of Los Angeles noticed the political shift in ideology as workers started to organize internationally.

Building on the ideas of Omni and Winant, racial conditions in the political realm are carried out as part of one's lived experiences. The formation of labor unions was an attractive alternative for people of Mexican descent who had been racialized and exploited. People of

[343] "Radicals in America Gain.: Communists are Busy, Says Attorney-General; Seek to Gain Control of Labor Unions; Government is Informed of Activities." 1921. *Los Angeles Times (1886-1922)*, Dec 09, 1921. https://colorado.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.colorado.idm.oclc.org/historical-newspapers/radicals-america-gain/docview/161117599/se-2?accountid=14503 (accessed July 10, 2021).

Mexican descent viewed their material conditions as being dominated by powerful and wealthy forces. They encountered structural racism that made them aware of their situation in what Omni and Winant refer to as "self-reflective action."[344] Confronting the racial hegemonic order premised on white supremacy allowed them to imagine a world where taking power was a realistic endeavor. As such, the Partido Liberal Mexican (PLM) was particularly important to the leftist movement during the early twentieth century. In Los Angeles, the PLM rose to become prominent leaders within the labor movement both in Mexico and Southern California. Their ascendance was significant during Mexico's Revolution – 1910 to 1920. Ricardo Flores Magón was an important leader in the movement. He arrived in Los Angeles in 1907 absconding political repression in Mexico. He was deemed an enemy of the United States who conspired to commit sedition against both the United States and Mexico's corrupt governments. He was viewed as a threat because he could rally people of Mexican descent living in the United States to organize against capitalism.[345] Magón's political activities did not go unnoticed by the city's leadership who held large investments in plots of land in Mexico.

Under the Porfirio Díaz dictatorship, investors were welcomed while many of Mexico's peasantry lived in squalor with limited or no access to wealth and land. Most of the land was not owned by Mexican citizens. Otis, along with other media barons in Los Angeles, held exclusive ownership over 850,000 acres of Mexican land.[346] Magón wanted to unite people of Mexican descent in Los Angeles to take back what was rightfully theirs. At the same time, the LAPD portrayed the Mexican population as dangerous radicals fearing that the Mexican revolution would

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[344] Michael Omni and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*, 138.
[345] Kelly Lytle Hernández, *City of Inmates: Conquest, Rebellion, and the Rise of Human Caging in Los Angeles, 1771-1965* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Caroline Press, 2017*)*, 93.
[346] Edward J. Escobar, *Race, Police, and the Making of a Political Identity*, 53.

cross the United States border to inspire a working-class rebellion. With the help of the *Los Angeles Times* and *Los Angeles Examiner*, anti-Mexican hysteria spread among the white population. Cacho refers to this framing as stereotyping and criminalizing "people of color who are always already most vulnerable and multiply marginalized."[347] The LAPD assured whites, "the police are ready to act instantly in case of an uprising." They went as far as to organize civilian patrol groups into a so-called "Citizens Police Force" that armed them with sawed-off shotguns.[348] This act was reminiscent of white lynch mobs in the southwest that murdered thousands of African Americans and people of Mexican descent. Though mob violence was not as prevalent in Los Angeles as it was in the south, it is fair to say that the lynch mob strategy provoked fear among white people.[349]

The LAPD bolstered white supremacy by validating the growing paranoia in the white community. The notion that people of Mexican descent would have the audacity to rebel against a white power structure was an affront to them. Their presumed subordinate social positions deviated from social standards grounded in white supremacy. Many white Angelinos felt that an uprising was unfathomable. People of Mexican descent who associated with radical leftist organizations were distrusted by the LAPD. If people of Mexican descent joined radical organizations, it was because they wanted to improve their living conditions and expose an economy that exploited their labor. Capitalism favored the wealthy and not the Mexican workers – both as citizens and foreign nationals. It was akin to the Socialist groups that also inspired white workers around the country.

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[347] Lisa Marie Cacho, *Social Death*, 4.
[348] Edward J. Escobar, *Race, Police, and the Making of a Political Identity*, 71.
[349] William D. Carrigan & Clive Webb, *Forgotten Dead: Mob Violence against Mexicans in the United States, 1848-1928* (New York: Oxford Press, 2013) 5.

Both shared similar grievances under capitalism.[350] Leaders like Magón offered hope, which worried the white elites of Los Angeles. Something needed to be done to prevent an uprising.

While many struggled to transform civil society and attempted to wrestle power away from the capitalists in the 1920s, William Parker had just joined the LAPD. In one of his first professional assignments, he was tasked to infiltrate radical organizations that were becoming adversarial to the conservative elites of Los Angeles.[351] Businessmen, for Parker, were the true Americans and the philosophy of Marxism stood in the way of American progress.[352] Businesses were afforded the protections from the LAPD while those who held radical ideals were transparently recognized as un-American. For Parker, being a Communist translated to being Godless and devoid of morality with no regard for American values. He stated, "To the everlasting credit of a few Americans, the age – old enemy in new disguise was recognized in time. They ripped away the sequined veils, and we saw communism for the ancient and diseased harlot it is."[353]

Parker and the Los Angeles Fascist Movement

Parker's anti-Communist views were shaped by a combination of faith and jingoism. He believed that the Godless Communists would destroy the United States unless defended by a stringent police force. For Parker, preserving the principles of American liberty rested on "the thin blue line" doctrine he propagandized in his speeches. Combining his ideals of faith and nationalism

[350] Howard Zinn, *The Twentieth Century: A People's History* (New York: Harper Perennial 1998) 54.
[351] Frank Donner, *Protectors of Privilege,* 249.
[352] O.W. *Wilson, Parker on Police,* 35.
[353] Ibid., 50.

in the form of policing embodied his perception that Communism needed to be stopped.[354] Because Parker presented Communism as an imminent threat to American democracy, the need for more policemen sustained his argument that police were relevant in the battle for ideologies. Being a police officer in the LAPD meant serving the country as part of one's patriotic duty to combat Marxism. Parker argued, "Patriotism is an attitude or feeling within the breast of man that makes him conscious of a debt of gratitude to the nation that nurtured him and payment of that debt he is willing to give his life itself if the national welfare so demands. We need patriotism today."[355]

Communism was used to terrify Americans. It began to be associated with criminal activity. For Parker, people involved in vices were agitators controlled by the Soviet Union. Their purpose was to bring down the United States. He believed that the Soviets wanted the United States to self-implode by engaging in vices. He claimed, "This plan goes deeper than a means of saving Los Angeles from the stigma of vice. We are protecting the American philosophy of life. It is known that Russia is hoping we will destroy ourselves as a nation through our own avarice, greed, and corruption in government."[356] In using illicit drugs, Parker said, "Soviet Russia believes that the United States contains within itself the seeds of its own destruction, to wit: avarice, greed, and corruption. Russia believes we are rewriting the history of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, another nation that became great and collapsed from its internal weakness."[357] Though Parker accused them of attempting to topple the United States through vice, he never adequately addressed the racism that plagued nonwhite communities. Moreover, he did not acknowledge the fascist threat that was gaining traction in Los Angeles.

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[354] James Woods, *Progressives and Police,* 422.
[355] O.W. Wilson, *Parker on Police,* 31.
[356] Jack Webb, *The Badge,* 253.
[357] O.W. Wilson, *Parker on Police,* 30.

Parker's pivot toward fascism was at the very least disturbing. Scholars have rarely mentioned the support Parker received from the city's right-wing. His pernicious dealings with such elements are important enough to revisit. What we can discern here is that he avoided discussing racism when it was brought up publically.[358] Instead, he deflected attention away from the issue and blamed the Left for causing trouble in Los Angeles. He did so by disseminating misinformation, which presented a narrative of a dangerous Communist Fifth Column living among Americans.[359] His savior persona was centered during this era. His reputation as an iron-fisted police chief earned him praise and he was considered a national hero by members of the John Birch Society – an ultra-right-wing, religious and political organization that advocated for Christian values and nationalism. The right-wing philosophies of the John Birch Society were expressed as ardent supporters of racial segregation, anti-choice, and the implementation of prayers in public schools. In the 1960s, the official publication, *American Opinion*, printed Parker on the cover multiple times. He participated in their weekly radio program hosted by Clarence Manion who was a member of the John Birch Society's National Council. Parker used the radio program to denounce the courts for being too lenient toward alleged criminals and downplayed civil liberties during Civil Rights Era.[360] Parker's brand of "Americanism" coincided with the ideals of the John Birch Society. Together, they formulated a fascist front in Los Angeles that made an enemy out of the Civil Rights Movement.

Indeed, the 1960s was a clash of values in which Parker personified as ultra-right-wing conservatism shrouded in white nationalism. He was a man who fought to keep segregation alive while appearing to be a devout Catholic. Right-wing organizations, such as the John Birch Society

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[358] George O' Connor, "The Negro and the Police," 91.
[359] O.W. Wilson, *Parker on Police,* 48.
[360] Frank Donner, *Protectors of Privilege,* 248.

and Christian Nationalists, expressed the same concerns as Parker who recognized that the demographics in Los Angeles were rapidly changing. The Civil Rights Movement was becoming a formidable opponent to white supremacy. As a result, they were publically villainized. For example, the John Birch Society accused the civil rights leader, Dr. Martin Luther King, of attending a "Communist Training School," which could be seen corresponding with Parker's attitude toward the Civil Rights Movement.[361] Under the appearance of patriotism, organizations like the John Birch Society thought of themselves as ideological warriors in the fight to rescue the United States from a growing "Red Menace." Parker, too, masqueraded as a protector of American patriotism. The similarities between them were striking. Both used the Cold War as a backdrop, as far-fetched allegations from the John Birch Society included a "Soviet Negro Republic" that would soon emerge in the southern states and be controlled by the Soviet Union unless Americans acted. Cacho explains these image interpretation as "presented in ways that expose how news media participate in creating or fabricating criminals by providing us the tools that enable us to see and simultaneously deny what we are seeing."[362] Other nefarious supporters of the John Birch Society included the former Alabama governor, George Wallace, a staunch segregationist.[363] The fascist organization established at least one hundred chapters across the southern states.[364] The organization promoted itself to be aligned with Christian principles and criticized anyone who went against their right-wing values. Though social activists like Dr. King grounded his principles for an equitable society predicated on the teachings of Christianity, the John Birch Society opposed

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[361] Don Terry, "Bringing Back Birch" *Intelligence Report*, Southern Poverty Law Center, March 1, 2013, Spring Issue.
[362] Lisa Marie Cacho, *Social Death*, 10.
[363] Eric Foner, Give Me Liberty! An American History: Volume Two (New York and London: W.W. Norton &Company, Inc, 2012), 970.
[364] Don Terry, "Bringing Back Birch" *Intelligence Report*, Southern Poverty Law Center, March 1, 2013, Spring Issue.

any Civil Rights legislation. Furthermore, the John Birch Society seemed detached from reality when they accused former President Dwight Eisenhower of being a secret Communist.

Anti-Communist Christians played a significant role in right-wing activism during the Cold War. In Los Angeles, Dr. Fred C. Schwartz was a popular religious figure who propagandized a political culture steeped in both Christianity and white nationalism. With a large white following during the fifties and sixties, Schwartz was able to attract supporters to anti-Communist rallies. The rallies were used as part of his crusade to save the United States from the "Red Menace." In 1961, 12,000 right-wingers attended a rally at the Hollywood Bowl with a television audience estimated at four million viewers. The event was free to the public and Democratic Senators, such as Thomas Dodd attended.[365] Schwartz established a week-long school with an anti-Communist curriculum that generated $214,000 where one-third of its proceeds came from people living in Southern California. Though the number of attendees were high, it gives historical context to the political and racial turmoil transpiring in Los Angeles at the time. It was a movement that attracted violent extremists committed to provoking social conflict if the opportunity arose. According to civil liberties attorney, Frank Donner, Southern California was home to at least 2,400 right-wingers who were organized into twenty-three guerrilla cells. These covert cells, along with the LAPD, became a well-organized, albeit frightening adversary to the Civil Rights Movement during the fifties and sixties. Schwartz's brand of fascism opposed a series of social issues, such as the proverbial big government, the legitimacy of the United Nations, the Supreme Court because of the *Brown v. Board 1954* decision, and the inevitability of racial integration.[366] Parker believed in

[365] "Anti-Communist Hollywood Rally Set for Bowl," *Los Angeles Times*, Oct 15, 1961.
[366] Frank Donner, *Protectors of Privilege,* 246.

the work that Schwartz was doing. He negotiated a tuition discount for LAPD officers who attended Schwartz's anti-Communist events.[367]

As noted by Derrick Bell in his seminal work, "*Brown v. Board 1954* and the Interest Convergence Dilemma," the United States was engaged in a cold war with the Soviet Union at the time of the ruling. The battle for ideologies was fought on the world stage, especially as "third world people" began to emerge in the post-colonial era. Bell contends that Supreme Court cases like *Brown v. Board 1954*, served the interests of the United States as a racial remedy, but more importantly, asserted its credibility as a nation committed to promoting racial equality for one of its most disenfranchised populations. If the United States continued to allow racial segregation to remain in public schools, then independent nations would scurry to the Communist nations. Bell argued, "Racial justice – or its appearance – may from time to time, be counted among the interests deemed important by the courts and by society's policymakers." He added:

> I contend that the decision in *Brown* to break with the court's long-held position on these issues cannot be understood without some consideration of the decision's value to whites, not simply those concerned about the immorality of racial inequality, but also those whites in policymaking positions able to see the economic and political advances at home and abroad that would follow abandonment of segregation.[368]

Indeed, it was a remedy to address the growing concerns of racial inequality while attempting not to look like an oppressive country in the post-colonial world.[369] In short, right-wing organizations, such as the John Birch Society was a public relations nightmare for the United States if they were

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[367] Frank Donner, *Protectors of Privilege*, 249.
[368] Derrick Bell, "*Brown v. Board of Education* and the Interest Convergence Dilemma" *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings that Formed the Movement*, ed. Kimberlé Crenshaw, Neil Gotada, Gary Peller & Kendall Thomas, (New York: The New Press, 1995), 22.
[369] Robert J.C. Young, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* (West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell Publishing, 2016), 59.

allowed to persist. The battle for ideologies would be lost, making it extremely difficult for the Unites States to defend its position on racial inequality.

Municipal Cold War Politics

For Parker, the Cold War and Civil Rights Movement were intertwined. Refusing to separate them, Parker often accused, usually without evidence, that the leaders of the Civil Rights Movement were agents of the Soviet Union. To exercise one's civil liberties was acceptable if race and political ideology reflected whiteness and conservativism. In 1954, a highly respected constitutional attorney named A.L. Wirin, challenged the legality of the LAPD's use of wiretapping. He was accused of being a Communist. Parker said of Wirin, "as identified with the defense of Communists in practically every action he has been involved in."[370] According to Parker, Communism was a philosophy foreign to the American way of life. Instilling fear into the public was one of Parker's strategies to garner support for his policing methods. He drummed up fears by falsely claiming that the Communists were infiltrating social institutions like churches, public schools, and the federal government. It was a strategy to make Parker appear as a protector of the American way of life. By doing so, Parker was able to convince white Angelinos that it was their civic duty to report anyone who held radical ideas grounded in Communism.[371]

Accusing people of Communist affiliation reflected the charged political climate. In 1952, when Mayor Fletcher Bowron pushed for investigating the personnel of the Housing Authority to uncover if any Communists were working within the department, he threatened to fire them if they

[370] Frank Donner, *Protectors of Privilege,* 249.
[371] O.W. Wilson, *Parker on Police,* 49.

were discovered. In Los Angeles, the debate for public housing became a Red Baiting issue as proponents for housing rights were labeled Communists. If county workers who had taken the state loyalty oath were discovered to be Communists, they were subject to being arrested and turned over to the District Attorney's office.[372] When Civil Rights leaders raised the alarm on these discriminatory practices, they were seen as troublemakers by the police.

Parker claimed that federal Civil Rights legislation would empower the Communists by obstructing police work. He added that the federal government was interfering in police work. Parker claimed that the Eisenhower Administration program proposal for equal rights "would put the police out of business." The federal legislation called for reforms to hold law enforcement accountable for the violence they inflicted on communities of color. He believed that the implementation of such policies would leverage the Communists and said, "who know they cannot bring a revolution or make advances in the face of a resolute police force."[373] According to Parker, the aim of the Civil Rights Movement was to harass the police and to prevent them from doing their work. One such *Los Angeles Times* article reveals the ideas of the chief who stated, "They [Communist] are using every opportunity to make it appear to observers that the police are using force with provocation – anything to put the police in a bad light; to drive them into a defense position."[374] It was an example of how the narrative was tightly controlled by Parker and the right-

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[372] "Bowron Initiating 'Reds in Housing' Probe" *Los Angeles Sentinel*, September 28, 1952.
[373] "Parker hits civil rights legislation: Law enforcement may be hampered, he tells officers." 1957. *Los Angeles Times (1923-1995)*, Feb 02, 1957. https://colorado.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.colorado.idm.oclc.org/historical-newspapers/parker-hits-civil-rights-legislation/docview/167060781/se-2?accountid=14503 (accessed July 14, 2021).
[374] "Goodhue, Norma H. 1951. Women: Chief describes how reds harass police." *Los Angeles Times (1923-1995)*, Jan 18, 1951. https://colorado.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.colorado.idm.oclc.org/historical-newspapers/women/docview/166163895/se-2?accountid=14503 (Accessed July 14, 2021).

wing local press. Together, public opinion could be swayed in their favor by falsely reporting that the LAPD was fighting a Civil Rights Movement that was controlled by Soviet agents. The article went on to write, "In order to prevent interference from established police agencies in the event of an effort to take over this country by revolution. By Communists' continued subversive acts now, they hope to place police in the position of being afraid to take any action and thus create adverse public opinion toward the police."[375] The Cold War was used by the local press as a justification to attack people and organizations who fought for social and racial justice.

For the Cold War to function as a pretext to criminalize Communists, fear-provoking rhetoric needed to be used. Parker knew how to promulgate disinformation by enlisting the help of the local newspapers. Both the city and LAPD worked in concert to advance such claims that Los Angeles had more Communist agitators than the largest city in the United States – New York. But to control the image of leftists who had the political will to organize disenfranchised workers and nonwhites, Parker supported a measure to register known Communists living in the city. The Communist Registration Ordinance was proposed by Councilman Ed Davenport on July 6, 1950.[376] The Los Angeles Police Commission approved an ordinance requiring Communists to register with the LAPD. Within a week, the Party issued a press release that intended not to comply with the registration campaigns. Harry Steinberg, a leading member of the Los Angeles Communist Party publically refused to register. He contended, "I am not going to register. The ordinance does not cover me as I do not approve of the overthrow of the government by force and

[375] "Goodhue, Norma H. 1951. Women: Chief describes how reds harass police." *Los Angeles Times (1923-1995)*, Jan 18, 1951. https://colorado.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.colorado.idm.oclc.org/historical-newspapers/women/docview/166163895/se-2?accountid=14503 (accessed July 14, 2021).
[376] Don Parson, "The Darling of the Town's Neo-Fascists," 467-505.

violence."[377] The measure not only had the full support of the city, but also adopted a policy to curb civil liberties. Parker went on to say, "In enforcing this, we will first gather competent evidence and place it before the City Attorney to determine if we have sufficient evidence to justify prosecution beyond any reasonable doubt. If so, the arrest will be made on a warrant."[378] Though he pledged to exercise constitutional freedoms to those subject to arrest, the notion of belonging to a radical organization was enough for the LAPD to isolate individuals and criminalize them in the process.

The Los Angeles City Council overwhelming voted to have Communists register with the LAPD. The only council member who dissented was Mexican American Ed Roybal of East Los Angeles.[379] As the only dissenting voice, Roybal expressed concern over the registration mandate. He believed it was "signing a political death warrant." The ordinance required that all known Communists register within ten days of publication or face criminal prosecution. Thirteen council members approved the act, which needed twelve votes to pass. Davenport noted that other cities had adopted similar measures to surveil and curb Communist activities. Davenport claimed that if Los Angeles did not establish this measure, then the city would become, "an escape hatch and asylum for Communists." Roybal contested the ordinance by stating, "because it will not only fail to curb the Communists danger, but it will push the door open for the entry of other dangers which may very well prove equally menacing to our way of life." He continued, "The doctrine implicit in this ordinance carried to its logical conclusion places every citizen and organization whose word

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[377] "Red sign-up approved be police commission." 1950. *Los Angeles Times (1923-1995)*, Aug 31, 1950. https://colorado.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.colorado.idm.oclc.org/historical-newspapers/red-sign-up-approved-be-police-commission/docview/166131178/se-2?accountid=14503 (Accessed July 15, 2021).
[378] Ibid.
[379] *"Hispanic Americans in Congress -- Roybal". www.loc.gov.*

or act resembles at any time those of the Communists at the mercy of any biased crockpot who may decide to report the matter to the Police Department as subversive."[380] The right to freely assemble as a political organization became a point of contention in Los Angeles. Civil Rights organizations became acutely aware of the dangers of curbing freedom of expression through political representation. In February of 1951, the Superior Court found the ordinances unconstitutional.[381] Yet, silencing the Left through threats of criminal procedures was nothing new to the city.

As early as the 1920s, leftists were criminalized for attempting to organize labor unions. They were usually accused of advocating for the overthrow of the United States government. This continued well into the mid-century as cities across the United States enacted laws that virtually punished "criminal syndicalism."[382] The notion was vague, but was used to target leftists. California proved to be a breeding ground for regional Cold War politics during the fifties. Sensationalized reports of Communist conspiracies were printed to galvanize support to apprehend and arrest leftists on falsified charges.[383] To counter this strategy, organizations such as the Civil Rights Congress (CRC) came to the defense of Communists who were accused of seditious conspiracies. One such court case accused Communists of toppling the government and the CRC

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[380] "Red Sign-up Ordered by City Council: Arrest Awaiting Communists Who Refuse to Register" *Los Angeles Times (1886-1922)*, Dec 09, 1921.
[381] Don Parson, "The Darling of the Town's Neo-Fascists," 467-505.
[382] "Radical in America Gain: Communists are Busy, Says Attorney-General; Seek to Gain Control of Labor Unions; Government is Informed of Activities." 1921. *Los Angeles Times (1886-1922)*, Dec 09, 1921. https://colorado.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.colorado.idm.oclc.org/historical-newspapers/radicals-america-gain/docview/161117599/se-2?accountid=14503 (accessed July 10, 2021).
[383] "10 of 14 Reds Freed on $200,000 Bail: U.S. Court Approves Liberty of Communists Pending their Appeal Reds' Bail." *Los Angeles Times (1923-1995)*, Aug 31, 1952. https://colorado.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/10-14-reds-freed-on-200-000-bail/docview/166330821/se-2?accountid=14503 (Accessed November 6, 2021).

became interested in the case and sent observers to record how the proceedings unfolded. Their goal was "to observe the conduct of the trial and report firsthand what members see and hear to their respective organizations." Moreover, the Congress wanted to entice interests from the public, so, they too could understand the proceedings of the criminal legal system and how it was used to prohibit leftists from gaining political power in the United States.[384] As the Cold War intensified, it was fought on two fronts, both internationally and domestically.

To discredit the Civil Rights Congress, the FBI planted a spy in an organization in a mining town in Pennsylvania. He was an FBI informant who attempted to glean information to register the CRC as a Communist organization. The FBI conspired to accuse the organization of "subversive activities" without providing evidence, but the lack of proof did not hinder the FBI's efforts.[385] The case proved nothing except that the United States was committed to weakening the labor movement because leftists were gaining political influence among workers across the United States. In 1917, the Russian Revolution inspired people on a global scale to seize state power, but the United States government was likewise committed to preventing a working-class uprising.[386] They precluded leftists from gaining influence in the labor movement and associated Communists or union organizers with criminal activities. Planting the seeds of doubt which were grounded in conspiracies to depose the United States was an important strategy. The strategy was to deflect

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[384] "Civil Rights Group Attends Reds' Trial." *Los Angeles Times (1923-1995)*, Mar 12, 1952. https://colorado.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/civil-rights-group-attends-reds-trial/docview/166332253/se-2?accountid=14503 (Accessed November 6, 2021).

[385] "Undercover Agent Tells Reds' Work: Former FBI Informant Appears as Witness in Investigation of Civil Rights Congress." *Los Angeles Times (1923-1995)*, Dec 10, 1954. https://colorado.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/undercover-agent-tells-reds-work/docview/166708970/se-2?accountid=14503 (Accessed November 6, 2021).

[386] Leon Trotsky, *History of the Russian Revolution* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2008) 474.

from the real issues that confronted the material conditions of unequal power between workers and the powerful capitalist class in the United States. Local ordinances to register Communists under the guise of political safety became a weapon for the right-wing establishment. Such ordinances were carried out to criminalize and apprehend leftists in the burgeoning Civil Rights Movement. If lauding the First Amendment was part of the American ideals of democracy, it was ignored when it came to leftist organizations.

The Catholic Church also became involved in fighting Communism in the United States. In 1952, Francis Cardinal Spellman of New York traveled to Los Angeles to discuss the ideological battle and used religion to combat the growing influence of Communism around the world. The implications were that the Church and state would unite to dispel notions of Communism as a source of economic freedom and equity. Spellman rebuked Communism as tyrannical, secular, and violent. He claimed that the Communist system relied on suppressing free speech and sought to control the masses through organized terror. He stated, "the slaughtering of hosts of people who the only crime was their determination to uphold their faith in God, the murder of the middle class and the pitiless reduction of whole populations into disciplined, fear-ridden robots."[387] By employing this narrative, the Cardinal was able to position the United States as a republic that upheld democratic principles of salvation rooted in a political ideology that espoused peace and liberty for all of its citizens. Spellman described the United States as, "This is America's way – the road to freedom and faith marked by the signposts of the 10 Commandments, the road of God's

[387] "Reception, Rebukes Nation for Losing World Leadership." *Los Angeles Times (1923-1995)*, Aug 19, 1952. https://colorado.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/spellman-calls-u-s-crusade-on-reds/docview/166391383/se-2?accountid=14503 (Accessed November 9, 2021).

teachings in personal national, and international life."[388] While his argument relied on faith coupled with jingoism, Los Angeles leaders found a partner with the Catholic Church. This was particularly salient since Parker was a devout Catholic who hoped to eliminate radical organizations in the city.

Political repression was present when Cardinal Spellman spoke of Communism. A key objective of this unconventional alliance was to situate the Left as illegitimate and to reframe the narrative that Communism was a system of political repression. Through this process, political containment began to emerge, but a religious doctrine was also employed to villainize the Left. Indeed, state repression supported by the Catholic Church created more tensions than it alleviated. In many respects, the Catholic Church was carrying on the legacy of authoritarian rule from the early days of the Puritan sect that imposed racial superiority over nonwhite groups in the United States.[389] Left-wing movements during this era struggled against racial, state, and political oppression. The Catholic Church's alliance with the LAPD forfeited its right as a spiritual institution by ignoring pleas to join movements that wanted to eradicate interlocking systems of oppression. A political and racial reorientation positioned the United States as a so-called Christian nation, which also aligned with the John Birch Society and Christian Nationals ideals of anti-Communism and segregation.[390]

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[388] "Reception, Rebukes Nation for Losing World Leadership." *Los Angeles Times (1923-1995)*, Aug 19, 1952. https://colorado.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/spellman-calls-u-s-crusade-on-reds/docview/166391383/se-2?accountid=14503 (Accessed November 9, 2021).

[389] Michael Omi and Howard Winant, Racial Formation in the United States, 24.

[390] Ibid., 31.

The threat of Communism saturated all facets of life in Los Angeles. Local interfaith groups lambasted Communism as a source of "un-American ideology" during political debates.[391] They used red baiting to scare the public. It was part of the strategy that conservatives regularly employed to suppress dissent. Accusations of being aligned with known Communists or worse, controlled by left-wing organizations, was enough to tarnish a politician's reputation. The debate for low-income housing rights became a controversial issue in the 1953 mayoral race. It was portrayed as a conspiratorial issue in which Socialists were attempting to infiltrate city council.

The fight for fair housing became a political liability in the early fifties. When Mayor-elect Norris Paulson beat outgoing Fletcher Bowron, he accused the incumbent of being "the tool and mouthpiece of the extreme left-wingers of the city." He continued, "Their aim would be the usual one of all extreme left-wingers throughout the United States – to divide the population, to weaken the people's trust in their elected leaders, to block all efforts by those leaders to provide good government."[392] Leaders of the Communist Party and Independent-Progressive Party (IPP) supported Bowron. They felt that the *Los Angeles Times* was biased in their editorials of wanting a Paulson victory because of his close ties to corporations. Both left-wing groups wanted Bowron to go on the offensive since Paulson would eliminate public housing for the poor. The CPUSA and IPP both understood that killing the public housing bill would open land grabs for the powerful

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[391] "Poulson Lashes Bowron Budgets: Mayor Hit as Disciple of More and More Spending and City Government Cost Hike." *Los Angeles Times (1923-1995)*, May 22, 1953. https://colorado.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/poulson-lashes-bowron-budgets/docview/166438556/se-2?accountid=14503 (Accessed November 9, 2021).

[392] "Bowron is Leftist Tool, Says Poulson: Mayor-Elect Pledges Honest Government and Responsiveness to People's Will Poulson Blasts Bowron and Left-Wingers." *Los Angeles Times (1923-1995)*, Jul 01, 1953. https://colorado.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/bowron-is-leftist-tool-says-poulson/docview/166519364/se-2?accountid=14503 (Accessed November 9, 2021).

realtors who supported Paulson's election.[393] For such real estate moguls, which included the Chandlers, Paulson guaranteed that their interests would be prioritized over those who had no political clout, particularly the working-class of Los Angeles.[394]

The Los Angeles Housing Authority was also reproached by the city's right-wing business leaders. The right to fair housing was framed as a larger part of a Socialist conspiracy that would engulf the neighborhoods with crime if the city built these housing projects for the poor. From these debates, poverty and crime was linked to race and ethnicity. Delgado and Stefancic note that racial profiling is used to falsely present people of color as criminals. It produces a representation predicated on safety concerns where people of color are criminalized in the public.[395] A housing activist named Frank Wilkinson was accused of being a Communist for his support in building housing projects in areas like Bunker Hill and Chavez Ravine.[396] When Wilkson served as an expert witness in a court proceeding regarding fair housing, the lawyer who represented the landlord organization asked for his political affiliations beginning in 1929. Wilkinson refused to answer based on the irrelevancy of the proceedings and the representing attorney of the real estate moguls demanded that the House Un-American Activities Committee open an investigation into his political associations. This line of questioning was encouraged by Parker to delve deeper into Wilkinson's past. According to Joe Domanick, who interviewed Wilkinson, he denied being part of the Communist Party. His main objective was to advocate for the working-class and poor

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[393] "Bowron Attack on Times Asked in Reds' Paper." *Los Angeles Times (1923-1995)*, May 07, 1953. https://colorado.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/bowron-attack-on-times-asked-reds-paper/docview/166498189/se-2?accountid=14503 (Accessed November 13, 2021).
[394] Joe Domanick, *To Protect and to Serve*, 159.
[395] Richard Delgado and Stephanie Stefancic, *Critical Race Theory*, 120.
[396] Since 1962, the Los Angeles Dodgers have played their home games on this land formerly occupied by multiracial, working-class residents.

communities of Los Angeles in matters concerning the right to fair housing. When Parker commissioned a study to show that higher rates of crime were found in the surrounding areas of local low-income housing projects, the report found that the adjacent areas had been cleared for six months.[397] Nonetheless, Parker spoke confidently that such housing projects would produce more crime without providing evidence.

The paranoia of a Communist takeover spurred Parker to blame the Soviet Union and the courts of lawlessness. When protests by the Women Strike for Peace were being discussed, Parker thought this to be a clandestine operation controlled by the Kremlin. Under Parker's command, the LAPD exaggerated definitions of Communist, progressive, and radical ideas to scare the public. It was a strategy to belie subversive operations in Los Angeles. Civil rights activists were accused of being controlled by the Soviets because their criticism of the police began gaining national attention.[398] In 1961, while speaking at a police convention, Parker stated that curtailing police work would aid the Communists. In front of a crowd of 150 attendees, Parker claimed, "Our free society would be in danger and in our international enemies could possibly destroy us if the judiciary continues to spell out the rules of criminal investigation."[399] Parker referred to the McNabb-Mallory rule, which stated that confessions ascertained during illegal detention could not be permissible in federal court. He exclaimed, "There has been a constant erosion of authority of the police officer."[400] He was vehemently against a proposed national commission to investigate

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[397] Richard Delgado and Stephanie Stefancic, *Critical Race Theory*, 159.
[398] James Woods, The Progressives and the Police," 455.
[399] "Parker Says Curbs on Police Aid Reds." *Los Angeles Times (1923-1995)*, May 18, 1961. https://colorado.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/parker-says-curbs-on-police-aid-reds/docview/167869779/se-2?accountid=14503 (Accessed November, 16, 2021).
[400] Ibid.

human and civil rights violations committed by the police. If a commission supported by the Civil Rights Movement was established, then it would favor a Communist takeover, he claimed.[401]

In 1960, a coroner's report departed from the usual police standard of justifiable homicide. Typically, when police officers killed a civilian, the coroner historically sided with the LAPD. However, the coroner's report ruled that killing of a sixteen-year-old black boy by a Mexican American officer was in fact a murder. This prompted an outburst by Parker. The report indicated that the policeman was guilty of "criminal homicide." Parker responded with an allegation that charging the officer with murder was a philosophy supported by Cuban revolutionary Fidel Castro. It appeared that Parker was attempting to connect seeking justice with Communism. If justice prevailed, then Parker believed Communism was guiding the Civil Rights Movement.

The police killings and misconduct sparked debates over instituting civilian review boards. The LAPD was opposed to introducing such measures to rein in their extralegal tactics. Recall that Parker worked to amend Section 202 to gain complete autonomy from the public. Section 202 meant that police officers could only be disciplined internally. Because these debates were controversial, Red baiting resurfaced and complicated matters further. The right-wing claimed that review boards would lead to the demise of the United States and a Communist takeover. The ACLU was in favor of a citizen's review board, but attempts to advance this initiative were thwarted by the LAPD as the organization was fallaciously identified as a Communist front. Cold War rhetoric was a powerful weapon used to discredit such organizations as a source of un-American values that divided American politics into two fractions. Progressives, leftists, and people of color who struggled for civil rights were villainized, whereas right-wing ideology reigned supreme in Los Angeles. Though these groups fought relentlessly to hold the LAPD

[401] James Woods, "The Progressives and the Police," 471.

accountable for their abysmal actions, ultimately, the ACLU, along with NAACP, was unsuccessful in establishing a review board for the violence they inflicted.[402]

The Invasion from Within

William Parker never missed an opportunity to conjure up fear that Communism would destroy the United States. When he spoke of an imminent threat, he decried that the Soviet Union could attack the United States at any given moment. The Soviets were viewed as an "external danger" to the internal security of the United States, but could be defeated if a war were to ensue. The aggressiveness of the Soviets, he contended, was part of their philosophy to supplant American ideals of democracy with promises to strengthen the weak, provide health care, and feed the starving population. He labeled the Soviets as "barbarians" who deployed its agents within the United States.[403] Such language was intended to provoke paranoia among the Los Angeles population. He argued not to be fooled by visions of hope that the Communists promised to deliver. Through his declamation, Parker was able to induce suspicion by maintaining that consistent vigilance was needed to stave off Communism from creeping into the American way of life. Those who were the most vulnerable were the social institutions that Americans took for granted, like schools and government.[404]

As early as 1960, the California School Boards Association and the California Association of School Administrators began misleading the public that Communism was an impending threat. Fraught with misgivings, the California bureaucratic apparatus began perpetuating Parker's

[402] James Woods, "The Progressives and the Police," 475.
[403] O.W. Wilson, *Parker on Police*, 49.
[404] Ibid., 50.

narrative that Communism was an ideology riddled with false hope. To follow this ideology would lead to the downfall of the United States. The state, along with the teachers, felt confident that comparing Communism to American values within an educational setting would allow students to discern those American ideals as more superior than of their so-called Communist enemies.[405] They spoke of Communism as an evil philosophy, taking for granted that students would ultimately understand the key differences between both philosophes. The tenets of Communism would be exposed and that its real agenda was shrouded in totalitarianism. Such teachings were grounded in an anti-Marxist lens, which meant misinformation became a central component to advancing Parker's rhetoric.

As such, local right-wing organizations claimed that anyone who did not align with their principles was part of a Communist plot to infiltrate the federal government. The John Birch Society charged individuals who did not agree with their brand of conservativism as Communist collaborators. Robert Welch, the leader of the organization decried that the federal government had been, "the most powerful single force supporting the steady worldwide Communist advance."[406] He went on to say, "a comparatively few thousand Communists, concentrated in key departments and agencies of our government" have done "a terrific job of determining both the policies and the actions of those agencies and departments – and hence indirectly of our whole

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[405] Turpin, Dick. "Teaching Communism in State Schools Urged: Educators Told Importance of Presenting Facts about Reds Along with U. S. History Communism Facts." *Los Angeles Times (1923-1995)*, Dec 09, 1960. https://colorado.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/teaching-communism-state-schools-urged/docview/167812280/se-2?accountid=14503 (Accessed November 18, 21).

[406] "U.S. Leads in Pro-Red Drive, Birch Head Says: Government being Drawn Steadily Down Road to Communism, Welch Declares." *Los Angeles Times (1923-1995)*, Nov 21, 1961. https://colorado.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/u-s-leads-pro-red-drive-birch-head-says/docview/168013503/se-2?accountid=14503 (Accessed November 18, 21).

government."[407] For Welch, the drive to register known Communists to the police and the investigations of the HUAC were simply not enough to dissuade his feelings that Marxists were covertly operating within the structures of the federal government. He upheld the notion that the United States used the Cold War as a ploy to slowly turn the country into a Communist nation. He believed that giving foreign aid to the country's allies to fight Communism was an example of how the United States government lied to Americans. There was no evidence to support his claims, only bombastic assertions to try to convince Americans that the Marxists had infiltrated the highest levels of government. As Welch made these allegations, he said, "it was planned by the Communists for that purpose." Parker also warned of Communists' infiltration within the government.[408] The John Birch Society was an unwavering supporter of Parker and his draconian police policies. Together, they brandished a dangerous form of right-wing conspiracies that aimed to discredit the United States government. Though Parker was not as vocal in accusing the federal government of Communism, not rebuking the John Birch Society's pronouncements made him an ally to this fascist organization.

Opposing the Right-Wing

Today, it is preposterous to think that a Communist conspiracy was hatched from within the federal government. To stage a coup against the United States meant that the strings were being

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[407] "U.S. Leads in Pro-Red Drive, Birch Head Says: Government being Drawn Steadily Down Road to Communism, Welch Declares." *Los Angeles Times (1923-1995)*, Nov 21, 1961. https://colorado.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/u-s-leads-pro-red-drive-birch-head-says/docview/168013503/se-2?accountid=14503 (Accessed November 18, 21).

[408] O.W. *Wilson, Parker on Police*, 49.

pulled from the Soviet Union – at least from the perspective of right-wing nationalist organizations. For these conspiracies to resonate among the right-wing base, misinformation becomes a powerful tool against communities who struggle for basic human rights. The narrative that the Civil Rights Movement was controlled by Communists provided ammunition for conservatives. For right-wingers, social issues such as human, racial, and economic rights stemmed from Communism – a perverted philosophy rooted in moral turpitude that threatened the racial and class status quo. In the United States, race and class are predicated on a social system that perches whites at the top. According Charles Mills, when individuals challenge this status quo, state-sanctioned violence is unleashed onto them.[409] Together, business elites, Christian nationalist, and the police became a hostile force to combat leftist politics. More importantly, they were protected by Parker's LAPD. However, young working-class, people of color began to understand how racism was intertwined with capitalism, which prevented their communities from gaining access to economic and social resources. Like their predecessors of the 1920s and 1930s, they formed Marxist organizations predicated on alliances and coalitions grounded in social injustice, and confronting police brutality.[410] The lack of resources and protection from the LAPD inspired people to organize.[411] The scare tactics from the past were no longer as intimidating to the next generation of Civil Rights workers. Radical thinkers from these underserved communities began to emerge and provided guiding theories that would go on to crystalize the working-class and nonwhites in cities like Los Angeles. Many recognized the contradictions of capitalism and witnessed how the police served the interests of the status quo, which left many feeling unprotected to police brutality.

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[409] Charles Mills, *The Racial Contract,* 86.
[410] Edited by Philip Foner, "Alliances and Coalitions," *The Black Panthers Speak* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 1970), 219.
[411] Kristian Williams, *Our Enemies in Blue: Police and Power in America,* (Oakland, Edinburgh & Baltimore: AK Press, 2015) 162.

Toward the end of Parker's tenure, Los Angeles became another city where black and brown residents were frustrated with racism and police brutality. Radical social justice organizations like the Brown Berets and Black Panther Party for Self-Defense grew out of the necessity to defend themselves from widespread police violence. Such organizations knew that they would not receive legal protections from city officials because they were excluded from the political projections built on white supremacy. Cheryl Harris observes, "Whiteness as property has carried and produced a heavy legacy. It is a ghost that has haunted the political and legal domains in which claims for justice have been inadequately addressed for far too long."[412]The leaders of the Brown Berets recalled incidents of misconduct when the police would patrol their neighborhoods often committing acts of violence on people of Mexican descent.[413] These violent encounters with the police justified Parker's argument to deploy more police officers to their neighborhoods believing that higher crime rates were often found in these communities.[414] The byproduct of police violence was that this next generation of Civil Rights workers sought out theories that could be put to practice.

Marxism became a theory used by working-class, nonwhite communities who grew tired of experiencing police violence. When the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense was created, they wanted complete autonomy over their communities. They understood that the police did not extend their protection toward the black and brown communities. In their ten-point Party Platform and Program initiative, they called for an end to police brutality and complete community control: "We believe we can end police brutality in our black community by organizing black self-defense

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[412] Cheryl Harris, "Whiteness as Property," 290.
[413] Ian F. Haney Lopez, *Racism on Trial*, 182.
[414] William H. Parker, "The Role in Community Relations," *The Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology, and Police Science,* Sep. - Oct., 1956, Vol. 47, No. 3 (Sep. - Oct., 1956), pp. 368-379.

groups that are dedicated to defending our black community from racist police oppression and brutality."[415] Moreover, these new political organizations did not submit to the demands of remaining non-violent in the struggle for achieving civil rights. Their point, which has been misconstrued historically, was to defend themselves from police violence. This new strategy frightened the white establishment, particularly law enforcement officials because for the first time in history – notwithstanding enslaved people rebelling – officers were concerned that they would find it difficult to suppress a new generation of social and political activists.[416]

Community activism was central to the rising tide of local Marxist organizations. Revolutionary consciousness and an anti-capitalist agenda informed these new social movements. The aim to eradicate state violence by eliminating police oppression was an important aspect then that has been recently revisited by the latest social movements.[417] However, fifty-six years after Parker's death, state leaders have worked to discredit these recent movements just as they did in the 1960s.[418] An important history that must be taken up by current scholars. Like the proposal of civilian review boards that the ACLU advocated for, the Panthers believed in seizing community control over the police by electing neighborhood councils to oversee accusations of brutality. They argued, "so that those whom the police should serve will be able to set police policy and standards of conduct."[419] The argument for community control was the culmination of well-known police violence that was never reined in by city leaders. To relinquish control meant being held

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[415] Edited by Philip Foner, *The Black Panthers Speak,* 2.
[416] Elizabeth Hinton, *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime,* 111.
[417] Oscar Fabian Soto and Clint Terrell, "Can the Panthers Still Save Us? Street Actions, Non-Profit Factions, and the Non-Movement Against State Violence" *St. Anthony's International Review,* June 2021, Vol. 16. No 2.
[418] Emily Bazelon, "Cory Booker Outfoxed Republicans on 'Defund the Police.' Now What?'" *New York Times,* August 25, 2021.
[419] Edited by Philip Foner, *The Black Panthers Speak,* 179.

accountable for misconduct that was rarely met with any form of disciplinary action. Indeed, the Cold War was fought on an international front, but it was also used to thwart domestic social and political movements like the Berets and Panthers. Unfortunately, the struggle to stop police brutality and attain basic civil liberties became weaponized for the right-wing. The FBI publicly denounced these groups as "Black Nationalist Hate Groups."[420] What the new leftist movements wanted was an immediate end to all police violence and poverty, and access to health care, but these appeals never materialized as such. Rather, its militancy was considered a threat to the power structure and needed to be violently crushed. In other words, it was the "Invasion from Within" that Parker spoke of to manufacture racial anxiety.

Three years after Parker's death, the Panthers were raided by the LAPD's newly formed Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT). On December 8, 1969, the LAPD descended on the Party's headquarters at 5:30 am on Central Avenue with a 300-man force supported by advance weaponry, including battering rams, helicopters, tanks, and police trucks.[421] These new weapons, provided by the Pentagon, used new forms of military power that other police departments subsequently emulated.[422] For the first time in Los Angeles history, a paramilitary structure disguised as local police was unleashed onto an American city. Their goal, to eliminate a black Marxists organization that served the community with food programs, education, and free healthcare. Just days before in Chicago, the police there assassinated the charismatic Black Panther leader, Fred Hampton, while he slept. It appeared to be a coordinated attack by various police departments to destroy the BPP. More raids occurred in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, Denver, Sacramento, and San Diego,

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[420] Elizabeth Hinton, *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime,* 111.
[421] Ibid., 207.
[422] Radley Balko, *Rise of the Warrior Cop: The Militarization of America's Police Force* (New York: Public Affairs, 2014) 79.

nearly everyone was arrested.[423] According to Max Felkner-Kantor, the raid in Los Angeles "created a sense of solidarity in opposition to police violence among the city's African American residents."[424] By and large, police violence had become part of the culture in Los Angeles. Nonwhites who organized became criminalized for serving their community, while a man like Parker was celebrated for fighting social activists.

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[423] Kristian Williams, *Our Enemies in Blue,* 162.
[424] Max Felkner-Kantor, *Policing Los Angeles*, 77.

Chapter Five:

"The LAPD's Vice Wars: Homophobia, Narcotics, and the Fall of Central Avenue"

Impunity in Los Angeles

Since the late nineteenth century, Los Angeles was a central hub for vice activities. Illicit drugs, drinking, gambling, and sex work were prevalent. The city attracted what the status quo considered vagrants, rabble-rousers, and sexual and moral deviants. Early on, city leaders ignored depraved behaviors when white men were engaged in such activities. According to LAPD historian Max Felker-Kantor, Los Angeles is a city where the police consider themselves as "professional crime fighters." Today, the city is mostly governed by liberal politicians and reformists.[425] Growing up in Los Angeles, the city purported to openly welcome people of all varieties, including immigrants and refugees, queers, artists, and so-called eccentric types. However, this was not always the case. When California was granted statehood into the United States in 1850, a social and racial hierarchy emerged just as it did in other states across the country. The state enacted racist laws toward Native Americans who lived on the land for thousands of years. Native nations, such as the Gabrielinos endured these harsh laws. These new laws consisted of anti-vagrancy ordinances that were utilized to arrest and imprison Native Americans as part of the settler colonial project. Native Americans were coerced to perform arduous labor tasks by being subjugated through inhuman practices. They were held in bondage in chain gangs while many also scrubbed public streets by cleaning horse manure and removing animal carcasses. Reminiscent of the enslavement, the city hired an overseer to monitor the incarcerated workers.

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[425] Max Felker-Kantor, *Policing Los Angeles*, 116.

Though vagrancy laws were enacted by city officials, they were rarely, if not, uniformly enforced. Drunken white men were seldom detained for the chaos they caused in the late nineteenth century. In the 1860s and 1870s, many of these men, rarely experienced consequences for their ill-repute behavior.[426] Acts of mayhem, including murder, theft, and violence consumed the city while city officials ignored the chaos that afflicted Los Angeles. In 1872, a drunk white mob murdered at least twenty Chinese immigrants, and no one was brought to justice.[427] This violence set the tone for the next one hundred years to how the police criminalized certain populations. The police would eventually intervene in such matters, but only when it came to migrants, sexual and moral deviants that departed from the ideological roots of conservative and white heteronormativity.

In the first half of the twentieth century, heteronormativity meant being stoic, white, and conservative. Personified by men like William Parker who believed in dichotomizing the world into good and evil. He was as a savior of western civilization willing to protect the public from alleged wicked behavior. In a radio address given in 1950 shortly after he was appointed chief, Parker stated, "There are men who lack control over their strong passions, and thus we have a vicious assaults, many times amounting to the destruction of the life of a fellow man."[428] For Parker, the relationship between good and evil depended on people following law and order. Those who veered from the traditional norms of heteronormativity became viewed as foreign and scapegoated as social deviants. Yet, anti-vice laws are subjective and arbitrary. In this case, they were created by a sense of moral superiority reinforced under the conditions of conservative heteronormativity. Enacting laws to police so-called immoral behavior was part of Parker's agenda

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[426] Kelly Lytle Hernandez, *City of Inmates*, 36-37.
[427] Erin Garcia "Los Angeles' Chinatown Massacre" July 14, 2020 https://californiahistoricalsociety.org/blog/los-angeles-chinatown-massacre/ (Accessed on December 11, 2021).
[428] O.W. Wilson, *Parker on Police*, 21.

under the auspices of morality. As such, heteronormativity, in the view of the LAPD was concerned with maintaining and preserving the image of the "white spot" that Parker espoused early on in his tenure. Gay relations, drugs, and black music fell outside of the scope of this depiction, which incensed the Los Angeles white establishment. They tasked Parker to monitor this behavior.

Surveillance and Racialized Spaces

This chapter highlights the lived experiences of gay men, and how narcotics and jazz were racialized by Parker's Gestapo-style of policing. The aggressiveness of the LAPD helped to spur a gay liberation movement. It began to combat the entrapment tactics used by the LAPD. Simone Browne's theory on surveillance strategies is helpful here, especially as same-sex relations, drugs, and a booming Central Avenue became surveilled by the LAPD. Browne also offers a historical discussion on the emergence of surveillance in which she delves into the history of racial profiling and how people are racialized in public spaces.[429] Parker surveilled communities that he believed were in opposition to the social order of Los Angeles. When the LAPD developed its *Annual Reports*, they kept records of sexual behavior in public. Terms, such as, "Sex Offenses (Except Rape and Prostitution)" became policing tools to document gay men caught in sexual acts. The data was used as a pretext to deploy more police officers around the city. It became strategically important in policing activities considered irregular in Los Angeles.

The *Annual Reports* were used to track gay and nonwhite Angelinos. Surveillance is a system that relies on gathering information to prevent crime from increasing, or at least, this is

[429] Simone Browne, *Dark Matters*, 13.

what law enforcement presupposed. Aggregated data was a powerful tool for Parker. He used it to argue for more police officers to arrest participants in the informal drug markets. Collecting data became transformative to policing and used to target African Americans and people of Mexican descent. "Racializing surveillance" was also developed through anti-drug policies and used to identify alleged criminals, typically black and brown people. It meant that whites were given spaces protected by the LAPD.[430] When the LAPD descended on people of Mexican descent, the media casted them as "drug pushers."[431] Browne argues that public spaces are design for white people. She suggests that surveillance structures are created in this way to monitor people who are considered undesirable. When the public clamored for the police to act at youth of Mexican descent entering their suburban spaces, they argued that their white children were in danger. Using these racial anxieties, the LAPD helped create racialized spaces to keep nonwhites out of their communities. Whiteness was not only protected, but also used as an excuse to contain nonwhites. For the LAPD, racialized surveillance was crucial in managing communities of color.[432]

Parker's system control was implemented to prohibit people from mixing with one other. Public spaces created through de facto racial boundaries kept an unwanted population away from the city's white neighborhoods. The intention to keep African Americans confined to Central Avenue was part of the LAPD's approach to segregate people. Yet, when white women and celebrities frequented the vibrant nightclubs of Central Avenue, the LAPD coordinated an anti-miscegenation attack. The LAPD was able to surveille Africans Americans if they were sequestered in this section of the city. The area, of course, became the "black" part of the city. The

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[430] Simone Browne, *Dark Matters*, 17.
[431] Matthew Lassiter, "Pushers, Victims, and the Lost Innocence of White Suburbia: California's War on Narcotics during the 1950s," Journal of Urban History 2015, Vol. 41 (5) 787-807
[432] Simone Browne, *Dark Matters*, 18.

LAPD's surveillance methods relied on dislocating the homogenous population found on Central Avenue. The people who converged in this district were separated in which Browne suggests is "the social sorting of people into categories as a means of management and ascribing differential treatment."[433] Such "differential treatment" was exercised through police power and violence found in neighborhoods such as the Central Avenue area.

Policing what was considered immoral behavior was just as vital during this era. Sexual perversion became analogous to Communism, and city leaders wanted this to stop. It was a departure from their perceived American values, and it gave the LAPD a reason to police this community. People were ostracized for their sexuality and forced to live in the shadows. Curtailing sexual deviancy became a moral fight for William Parker and the city government. As early as 1947, the city council approved a resolution to support the LAPD in their efforts to permanently close gay bars. Parker willfully took on the initiative as part of his fight against alleged sexual perversion. He acted in accordance with the resolution assuring the city council that his department would work tirelessly to apprehend individuals caught in same-sex relations.[434]

With its history of violently breaking up leftist movements, the LAPD continued this tradition by turning its attention toward the gay community. They focused on what historian Emily K. Hobson notes as "antigay entrapment and brutality as abusive police practices."[435] These policing practices drew other leftist organizations into the fight. The Civil Rights Congress (CRC) challenged allegations of sexual perversion as well as reported police abuses. The CRC spent much

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[433] Simone Browne, *Dark Matters,* 14.
[434] Whitney Strub, "The Clearly Obscene and the Queerly Obscene: Heteronormativity and Obscenity in Cold War Los Angeles" *American Quarterly*, Vol. 60, No. 2 June 2008, pp. 372 – 398.
[435] Emily K. Hobson, "Policing Gay LA: Mapping Racial Divides in the Homophile Era, 1950 - 1967" *The Rising Tide of Color: Race, State Violence, and Radical Movements Across the Pacific* (University of Washington Press, 2014) 189.

of its time working in nonwhite, working-class neighborhoods, like in Echo Park. A neighborhood adjacent to Eden dale – now known as Silver Lake – which was home to members of the Communist Party and other leftists.[436] The CRC argued that the long brutal practices of the LAPD were particularly aimed at communities who lacked political representation and that people needed to stand up to the city's authoritarian rule.[437]

The CRC consistently received threats of violence. At one point, one of their leaders was kidnapped by unknown assailants. The kidnapping was never taken seriously by federal investigators and blamed the organization's leadership for being against conservative values.[438] The CRC often had to refute accusations of being a subversive organization that was branded as a "Red Front" by the right-wing institutions, like the Subversive Activities Control Board who held major political clout at the time.[439] Because organizations like the CRC were hampered by violence and threats, targeted gay men had to rely on organizing themselves to dispute the entrapment methods employed by the LAPD. The trajectory of this has its roots in left-wing political organizations.

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[436] Daniel Hurewitz, *Bohemian Los Angeles and the Making of Modern Politics* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University Press, 2008) 165.
[437] Emily K. Hobson, "Policing Gay LA," 188.
[438] "Investigation of Brown Kidnaping Story Delayed: Civil Rights Congress Official Who Reappeared Reported Under Sedation." *Los Angeles Times (1923-1995)*, Jan 08, 1955. https://colorado.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/investigation-brown-kidnaping-story-delayed/docview/166743810/se-2?accountid=14503. (Accessed December 11, 2021).
[439] "Civil Rights Congress Branded as Red Front." *Los Angeles Times (1923-1995)*, Jul 30, 1957. https://colorado.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/civil-rights-congress-branded-as-red-front/docview/167161102/se-2?accountid=14503. (Accessed December 11, 2021).

Harry Hay and the "Mattachine Society"

Around the same time of the Parker era, an organization of gay men surfaced as a resource to combat police harassment – the Mattachine Society. Considered to be one of the earliest and influential liberation organizations in queer history, especially in Los Angeles, the group formed to stop police practices of entrapment. They stated, "The issue here is not whether the man is a homosexual, but whether the Police Department is justified in using such methods."[440] The CRC and Mattachine Society had a strong connection due to both groups challenging the LAPD's surveillance strategies. The ties between these organizations revolved around shared values of freedom of expression and sexuality that embodied a leftist philosophy. Indeed, the visibility of queer men forced many to live underground because of the police practices of entrapment and the press that publicly shamed them. City leaders supported these entrapment laws, which consisted of enforcing nebulous sodomy laws. For city authorities, such laws constituted a mode of social control that attempted to institutionalize heteronormative practices by arresting the men caught in compromising positions.[441] They suggested that gay men were not only engaging anti-heteronormative behavior, but also a part of an openly obscene community. Politicians used anti-heteronormative rhetoric to pathologize gay men. Obscenity tropes became powerful tools for Los Angeles officials that attempted to tie the gay community to so-called un-American activities. Being visible and gay was offensive to the right-wing philosophy. The anti-homosexual sentiment reflected the era when medicine and psychiatry claimed that same-sex desires were a mental

[440] Emily K. Hobson, "Policing Gay LA," 189.
[441] Whitney Strub, "The Clearly Obscene and the Queerly Obscene," 379.

illness. As a result, sexual perversion became a cause taken up by right-wing Councilmembers who openly supported laws to criminalize gay men.[442]

Harry Hay founded of the Mattachine Society in 1950. According to Historian Daniel Hurewitz, the organization had between 2,000 to 5,000 California members that lasted into the early 1970s.[443] Hay had been a member of the Communist Party and applied what he learned from them to organize gay men against the draconian laws set by the city. As an open Marxist, Hay, immersed himself with what European Communists were advocating for globally.[444] That is, worldwide revolution to empower workers. He became an educator for the Los Angeles Communist Party and excelled as a teacher who developed a unique method of teaching Marxist theory that was organized into three parts: elementary, high school, and college education levels.[445] As a brilliant educator, he focused on everyday experiences of complex theoretical frameworks that exploited workers. By drawing on people's lived experiences, Hay was able to formulate alliances with people who wanted to make transformative changes to their living conditions. His teaching was so influential that he taught all over Los Angeles, including other municipalities like Maywood, Hawthorne, El Segundo, and Redondo.[446] Hay adhered Party rules and believed in the tenets of Marxism in which theory and praxis would liberate workers from capitalist exploitation. His political commitment to Communism made him a trusted leader to the causes grounded in fighting against worker exploitation, racial, and sexual discrimination. Such commitments made

[442] Whitney Strub, "The Clearly Obscene and the Queerly Obscene," 378.
[443] Daniel Hurewitz, *Bohemian Los Angeles and the Making of Modern Politics*, 241.
[444] Stuart Timmons, *The Trouble with Harry Hay: Founder of the Gay Movement* (Boston: Alyson Publishing, 1990), 117.
[445] Ibid., 120.
[446] Ibid., 121.

Hay a formidable opponent to the right-wing ideology that permeated the city during the Cold War era when gay men were singled out as sexual perverts by the city's conservative politicians.

According to Hay's biographer, Stuart Timmons, the Mattachine Society derives from the ancient Romans who celebrated the New Year with extravagant parties that consisted of women and enslaved people as equals to their masters. It was a celebration where equal rights were not only granted to the aforementioned, but eventually turned into a pagan holiday called the "Feast of Fools" – known today as April Fool's Day. During the fifteenth century, the Roman Catholic Church banned the festivities as ultra-conservative ideology crept into Western civilization and influenced the way people thought about pagan holidays. Though people were prohibited from celebrating the pagan rituals, they, nonetheless, survived through secret societies that spread across Europe well after the fifteenth century.[447]

Certain elements of the festivities attracted Hay. The theatrical aspect that conveyed messages to the oppressed along the French countryside captured Hay's attention. He also participated in a theatre company where he became politicized after meeting his first male romantic partner – Will Geer. Through the theatre, both men put on productions that centered around leftist politics. Geer introduced Hay to the Communist Party where he later cultivated his political ambitions studying Marxist theory.[448] Because he taught courses on imperialism, on the conditions of the current political economy, and aspirations for revolution,[449] Hay would later take what he learned from his time spent with the Communist Party and employ them into the gay liberation movement. The CRC and Communist party provided a well-structured model for fighting injustices that Hay would later use in the Mattachine Society. After being invited to an

[447] Stuart Timmons, *The Trouble with Harry Hay,* 129.
[448] Daniel Hurewitz, *Bohemian Los Angeles and the Making of Modern Politics,* 241.
[449] Ibid., 244.

underground party with other gay men that discussed how they were discriminated for their sexuality, Hay began outlining his vision for an organization that would struggle for gay liberation.

Hay compared gay men to other oppressed minorities living in the United States. He called the discriminate men, "the Androgynous Minority."[450] Initially, Hay and his companions in the Mattachine Society did not have any political models to mimic. A friend of Hay's named, Champ Simmons, informed him of an obscured organization called The Chicago Society for Human Rights who advocated for early gay rights in 1924. The organization was led by Henry Gerber who developed his organization by using Socialist theories for gay liberation. The organization was disbanded months after they registered with the state of Illinois.[451] During this time, the men in the Mattachine Society were discussing language reflective of their cause. The word "homosexual" had been associated with mental illness. Therefore, the men felt the term was demeaning and began using *homophile*. *Homo* – lover of the same – with *philos*, which means friendship or loving.[452] From there, the group began holding meetings and organized around issues concerning homophobia and police entrapment. When the group started, some members objected to being considered a "cultural minority" because they did not want to be compared to other people of color.[453] The thought of being situated in an inferior position unsettled other members mostly comprised of white men. Still, for the movement to be successful, Hay believed that gays and lesbians needed to be positioned as a social minority, which he felt was critical to eliminating homophobia.

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[450] Daniel Hurewitz, *Bohemian Los Angeles and the Making of Modern Politics*, 136.
[451] Ibid., 145.
[452] Ibid., 149.
[453] Ibid., 151.

Hay felt that the country was moving toward fascism because of the witch-hunts led by the House of Un-American Activities Committee. Republican Senator Joseph McCarthy and other right-wing Congressmen claimed that the federal government was riddled with Communist spies.[454] The purges – with no legal bearing – became a legitimate concern for Hay, leftists, and other gay men. According to Hay, many of his gay friends turned out to be FBI informants, which led to paranoia among Party members.[455] Suspicion among the Party hardliners became a growing concern. Moreover, peculiar sex laws were enacted to target gay men. For instance, anyone caught having sex outside of the missionary position was subject to arrest and could be made to register as a sex offender.[456] Though these laws seemed impossible to enforce, the notion that gay men could get caught in such positions was enough to induce fear among the gay and Left community. The policing of sexual norms produced a fabricated crisis that made people believe that alleged sexual perversion was a threat to their community and heteronormativity. The social worth of these men was measured by their so-called sexual transgressions. But resistance to heteronormative practices are just equally important. As Lisa Maria Cacho argues, "Claims to empowerment through deviant and defiant behavior urgently unsettled the stubborn relationship between value and normativity."[457] The ethical arguments produced during this time propelled the LAPD to monitor this seemingly invisible community that was beginning to come out of the shadows.

Policing sexuality was clearly rooted in heteronormative practices. The looming threat of police surveillance seeped into the psyche of gay men living in the closet. The risk of getting caught was internalized into a form of self-policing by maintaining constant vigilance over their

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[454] Daniel Hurewitz, *Bohemian Los Angeles and the Making of Modern Politics,* 246.
[455] Stuart Timmons, *The Trouble with Harry Hay,* 160.
[456] Ibid., 147.
[457] Lisa Marie Cacho, *Social Death*, 167.

affairs. It was fear-inducing surveillance in the form of heteronormative standards extended onto the streets of Los Angeles. But surveilling gay men did not end there. In 1950, all government agencies were expected to participate in internal purges by publically calling out alleged "sex perverts." They were tasked to discreetly vet their workers and to provide proof of sexual perversion for immediately termination if these men and women were involved in wayward behavior. According to the FBI, about 200 people were identified and documented as "sex perverts" with rumors circulating that 3,000 more known alleged workers were still employed by the government.[458] As Browne describes, "The examination in the disciplinary institution seeks to objectify and transform individuals through architectural arrangements, registration, and documentation."[459] Gay men and lesbians led secret lives to protect their careers. In addition to their livelihoods at stake was the possibility of being thought of as a sexual deviant, which could lead to a life of isolation.

Moreover, the term, "sexual perverts" was widely used on the basis that this community could be associated with people who committed sex crimes against children. The association was cruel and gave the LAPD a reason to target the gay community. More importantly, the LAPD had the full support of other legal representatives.[460] Judges went as far as to say that "Confirmed sex perverts should be submitted to surgery for protection of children."[461] These laws, thus, began to

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[458] "Government Agencies to make Morals Check." *Los Angeles Times (1923-1995),* May 10, 1950. https://colorado.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/government-agencies-make-morals-check/docview/166068427/se-2?accountid=14503. (Accessed on December 16, 2021).
[459] Simone Browne, *Dark Matters*, 41.
[460] Los Angeles Police Department *Annual Reports*, 1951. 24.
[461] "Sonny Tufts and Hawaiian Actress Seized as Drunk." *Los Angeles Times (1923-1995),* Jun 01, 1951. https://colorado.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/sonny-tufts-hawaiian-actress-seized-as-drunk/docview/166248766/se-2?accountid=14503. (Accessed on December 16, 2021).

effect the way the Communist Party thought of their gay comrades. In 1950, the Party took a position against members who identified as homosexual, which led to an internal purge as an attempt to maintain their political legitimacy.[462] The witch-hunts forced Hay out of the Party because members did not want to risk the Party being portrayed as illegitimate during the height of the Cold War. Party membership began to decline, and Hay was considered a political liability. He left the Party to protect his comrades. But for Hay, a different struggle was beginning to develop.

When Browne speaks of the "observational component of the power of the sheriff might have been equal to that of the citizen" she speaks of the so-called shared power of surveillance between the police and community as fundamental to watching people who deviant from social norms. A shared commitment to expose sexual transgressions. By doing so, people are made to feel that they are doing their part and demonstrating a sense of duty to the ideals of American values, which are grounded in white heteronormativity. Browne adds, "the inequities between those who were watched over and those who did the watching are revealed. The violence of this cumulative gaze continues in the postwar era."[463]

The Communist Party understood that their every move was being monitored by powerful forces from the federal government. The Party kept a close eye on members that they felt could jeopardized their political legitimacy. Rather than openly support Hay's sexuality, they abandoned him because the Party's reputation was prioritized. The government did not have to conduct an investigation into the Party's membership files because they did the work for them. Though Hay split with the Communist Party during an era when fascism in Los Angeles loomed, he still credited

[462] Daniel Hurewitz, *Bohemian Los Angeles and the Making of Modern Politics,* 243.
[463] Simone Browne, *Dark Matters*, 21.

his time spent with them as the years that helped sharpen his vision to enact transformative and radical changes to early gay causes.[464]

The LAPD's Moral Offensive

When Parker became chief of the LAPD, he wanted to clean up the city from graft and vice. To implement these changes, the LAPD began a public relations campaign to revamp its image as a department that was incorruptible. One year after Parker was appointed, the 1951 *Annual Reports* wrote of their officers, "The private and public life of the Los Angeles police officer is closely regulated. Instead of having special privileges, as commonly misconceived, he forsakes many of the rights of private citizens when he takes his oath of office." [465] Yet, throughout the Parker era, the LAPD made themselves out to be the victims of a smear campaign hamstrung by a barrage of criticisms. Such criticisms warranted the LAPD to be on the offensive toward groups that challenged their authority. In their 1958 *Annual Report*, the LAPD stated that the department faced a hiring crisis because of the competitive labor market in the city. They added, ""Police baiting" … the frequent and vicious practices of harassing the police by unjustified attacks for political aggrandizement, economic gain, or for academic sport, is fulfilling its express purpose of neutralizing the efforts of the Department to attract qualified candidates."[466] Such critiques, of course, never amounted to censuring police officers, but instead refocused their energy on attacking people they believed exhibited immorality.

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[464] Daniel Hurewitz, *Bohemian Los Angeles and the Making of Modern Politics,* 242.
[465] Los Angeles Police Department *Annual Reports*, 1951, 11.
[466] Los Angeles Police Department *Annual Reports*, 1958, 11.

The men in the Mattachine Society were primarily white and middle-class ranging between their thirties and forties.[467] The group debated what constituted a "social minority." Though these men were not considered a "social minority" like other racially oppressed groups, they did have to endure oppression by hiding their sexual identity in public. A sense of solidarity arose among people who were targeted by the LAPD. These are important connections for understanding how the LAPD policed communities that departed from the white heteronormative social order. For queer people, living in the shadows impelled the framework of being in the "closet." Hay stated, ""the closet" was a gay closet, it was a political closet, and the public political action was the thing that people hid from, not being public about their "sexuality.""[468] Being open about your sexuality meant you were exposing yourself to arrest through aggressive tactics by the vice squads. The *homophile* movement faced a right-wing Catholic leader in Parker who ratcheted up heavy policing toward gay men after 1950. While many gay white men lived in working-class, racially mixed neighborhoods, including Silver Lake and Echo Park, Parker placed great emphasis on patrolling these areas. The LAPD surveilled the city's nonwhite and queer community by enforcing strictures on marginalized communities that were easy to surveil.[469] Los Angeles Historian Mike Davis argues that Los Angeles was fragmented through racial and class demarcations via heavy policing that ensured people of color from working-class neighborhoods would not dare to cross the de facto boundaries set by the LAPD. To do so, meant being targeted for harassment and eventually arrested by the LAPD.[470] Nonwhite queers increasingly remained in their neighborhoods and

[467] Emily K. Hobson, "Policing Gay LA," 190.
[468] Daniel Hurewitz, *Bohemian Los Angeles and the Making of Modern Politics,* 246.
[469] Emily K. Hobson, "Policing Gay LA," 192.
[470] Mike Davis, City of Quartz, 223-224.

congregated in private, such as in people's homes and underground locations out of the view of the LAPD.[471]

When Parker came to power, cases regarding "sexual perversion" proliferated. According to Parker's protégé and personal driver, the infamous and racist Chief Daryl Gates, police officers were uncomfortable about responding to calls to arrest men engaged in sexual acts. The LAPD amassed 2,430 "sexual perversion" charges ranging from sodomy, lewd acts, and crimes against nature. Of course, "crime against nature" is vague, but the inference is that homosexuality went against heterosexual norms. Another nebulous term that appears in the *Annual Reports* was "Using vehicle for immoral purposes." In 1950, arrests for sexual perversion offenses nearly doubled, which culminated to 84.9% increase from the 1940s.[472] Most of the arrests were found in the Central Division topping all charges at 52.1%; Hollywood was a distant second at 17%.[473] The term for "sexual perversion" was later ambiguously renamed "sex offenses," but these particular cases continued to remain steady throughout the fifties. By 1953, the LAPD's *Annual Reports* noted that sex offenses did not include rape and prostitution. In the same year, 2,323 total bookings were recorded.[474] The next year, the *Annual Reports* added "Offenses against Family & Children" to make the distinction between child abuse cases and arrests of gay men allegedly caught in sexual acts. By the mid-fifties, sex offenses in the Central Avenue district continued to lead all total charges. In comparison to other arrests and re-bookings, sex offenses were third by 1956.[475] Yet,

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[471] Emily K. Hobson, "Policing Gay LA," 193. Due to COVID restrictions, I was unable to find sources that could have discussed the private lives of nonwhite gays and lesbians. Instead, I had to rely on secondary sources regarding this community. Also, my search in using ProQuest did not find data on the lives of nonwhite queers during this era.
[472] Emily K. Hobson, "Policing Gay LA," 199.
[473] Los Angeles Police Department *Annual Reports*, 1950. 29.
[474] Los Angeles Police Department *Annual Reports*, 1953, 21.
[475] Los Angeles Police Department *Annual Reports*, 1956, 23.

in 1960, "Sex Offenses (Except Rape and Prostitution)" amassed 4,023 arrests – more than stolen property, weapons, embezzlement, rape, and homicide combined.[476]

The social monitoring by the LAPD was a self-appointed institution of morality. By situating gay men as sexual deviants, a dehumanization process ensued by classifying them as such. The spaces created by gay men under the surveillance of LAPD allowed for temporary alternatives and a re-imagination of liberation in the face of police oppression. To engage in sexual practices with other men in public spaces was risking their livelihood. As such, arrests meant being exposed to public scrutiny. Lisa Marie Cacho discusses how forms of resistance to systematic oppression creates the conditions to confront such subjugation.[477] The importance of this is that a source of empowerment arises among oppressed people. The nature of oppression created the conditions of rebellion. Yet, these gay men were not performing acts of resistance as a form of protest. Rather, their sexuality was part of their identity and their resistance unsettled and disrupted heteronormative practices.

The boiling point was finally reached on January 1, 1967. Five months after Parker's death, eight undercover LAPD officers raided the Black Cat Tavern in Silver Lake when patrons were exchanging celebratory kisses as the clock struck midnight. In typical LAPD fashion, people were dragged out of the bar and beaten. The assault created a frenzy that drew many to the bar to protest the unhinged tactics of the LAPD. The event proved to be a turning point for the early gay liberation movement in Los Angeles. No longer were people going to hide their sexuality in public. Instead, solidarity with the movement grew and attracted 600 people who gathered in front of the bar on February 11. Protestors demanded the end of entrapment practices and respect of individual

[476] Los Angeles Police Department *Annual Reports*, 1960, 21.
[477] Lisa Marie Cacho, *Social Death*, 167.

sexual liberties, in which the LAPD capitulated.[478] That is not say that the queer community has not faced homophobia since then. However, the LAPD's abuses and entrapment policies led to people fighting these injustices not only Los Angeles, but elsewhere, including New York. In addition, Hay was not the only queer person that was guided by radical teachings. I would be remiss if I did not mention the importance of other comrades like Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera. Both were queer, nonwhite, and radical.[479]

The LAPD's Early Drug Wars

When Parker took over the LAPD, he, and Harry J. Anslinger – director of the Federal Bureau Narcotics – believed that drug addiction fostered crime.[480] Anslinger revered the LAPD as one of the most well-equipped police departments to handle the informal drug markets. In 1952, he stated, "One of the most efficient local squads is the hand-picked and specially trained twenty-eight man team of the Los Angeles Police Department."[481] Parker used this celebrated sponsorship to validate his moral cause for taking on the informal drug markets.[482] Though Parker and Anslinger did not always agree, perhaps because of egotism governed their short-sighted views, they both believed that drug users were part of a larger social problem mostly found in nonwhite

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[478] Laura Dominguez, "The Black Cat: Harbinger of LGBTQ Civil Rights," February 11, 2017 https://www.kcet.org/shows/lost-la/the-black-cat-harbinger-of-lgbtq-civil-rights (Accessed January 5, 2022).
[479] Charlene A. Carruthers, *Unapologetic: A Black, Queer, and Feminist Mandate for Radical Movements* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2018), 59.
[480] Kathleen J. Frydl, *The Drug Wars in America, 1940 – 1973* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 239.
[481] "Youth and Narcotics: A Study of Juvenile Drug Addiction," Los Angeles Police Department, 1952.
[482] O.W. Wilson, *Parker on Police*, 40.

communities.[483] Illicit drug users were positioned as moral deviants that needed to be apprehended immediately, otherwise, US society would implode into chaos. Because both men argued that drug pushers were elusive, Parker and the FBN were able to invoke familiar racist tropes that dichotomized perceived bad versus good. An accepted belief that helped promote the idea that the source of rising crime in Los Angeles was due to the city being within proximity of the Mexican border. At one point, Parker suggested that the United States needed to close its borders to prevent the flow of illegal drugs into the country.[484] Parker stated, "Since the major supply of the world's narcotics is grown outside of the United States and legal imports are strictly limited, illegal drugs are smuggled through seaports, airports, and border stations of the country. For these reasons, a city that lies in the path of legitimate foreign trade is subject to the dangers of the illicit drug trade."[485] Presenting the drugs as a foreign problem allowed Parker to frame American citizens in need of police protection. It legitimatized his position as an authority figure concerned with foreign influences.

Parker accused the federal government of not doing enough to support local police departments. While giving testimony before the President's Interdepartmental Committee on Narcotics, he claimed a Mexican syndicate was responsible for smuggling heroin into the United States. He argued that the federal agencies needed to extradite Mexican nationals and advocated for closing the border because it would hurt the Mexican economy. Parker stated, "They'll come around – they need that money." But when asked by a member of the Justice Department if he was

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[483] Suzanna Reiss, *We Sell Drugs: The Alchemy of US Empire* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2014), 199-201.
[484] Kathleen J. Frydl, *The Drug Wars in America,* 240.
[485] "Youth and Narcotics: A Study of Juvenile Drug Addiction," Los Angeles Police Department, 1952.

implying an international threat, he denied the accusation.[486] He deflected answering questions when asked if the problem might be a local issue that the LAPD needed to focus its energies on. Instead, he turned the hearing's attention toward the federal agencies' incompetence claiming that they were not doing enough to extradite the criminal elements living in Mexico. Parker went on the offensive stating, "Maybe we should move the State Department over there. I'll help you move it. Maybe that's where it belongs."

In the early fifties, Parker declared that the city had a "juvenile addiction problem."[487] In 1952, a report called "Youth and Narcotics: A Study of Juvenile Drug Addiction in Los Angeles" advocated for helping youth struggling with drug addiction. This was one of the few instances that Parker resorted to using the community to stave off substance abuse. He also claimed that more than half of robberies and serious crime in all of Los Angeles stemmed from the informal drug markets. He presented the issue as a community problem that needed to be handled with rehabilitation. In 1940, the number of arrests was at an all-time low at 9, however, the number increased to 214 eleven years later. In comparison to adult arrests, which were at 382 in 1940 and then 2,296 by 1951, respectively. The latter year represented 52.8% of all total arrests.[488] For Parker, it was a matter of addicts seeking their next fix that led them to commit higher rates of theft. Parker distorted the truth when it came to evaluating the sources of crime and drug addiction, but his rhetoric was powerful enough to publically criminalize alleged addicts.

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[486] Sherman, Gene. "Parker Rips U.S. Narcotics Laxity: Charges Federal Agency Fails to Act Against Known Dope Ring Parker Assails Federal Laxity on Narcotics." *Los Angeles Times (1923-1995),* Apr 02, 1960. https://colorado.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/parker-rips-u-s-narcotics-laxity/docview/167619459/se-2?accountid=14503. (Accessed on December 18, 2021).

[487] "Youth and Narcotics: A Study of Juvenile Drug Addiction," Los Angeles Police Department, 1952.

[488] Ibid., 8.

Parker blamed half of all the reported crimes on illicit drugs and the leniency of the courts, specifically being critical of the *Cahan* ruling as the cause of rising crime. Parker contended that in the first six months of 1955, crime increased by 43% while arrests went up by 15%.[489] Moreover, Parker claimed that many authorities in law enforcement estimated that drugs were responsible for at least 50% of all major crimes because of the exclusionary rule in the *Cahan* decision. Still, because the Court's decision purported to aid "criminals," he said that there was a 4.5% decrease in arrests due to the ruling.[490] The so-called legal handicap portrayed the LAPD as the losers in battle against rising crime. In 1957, Parker said in the last seven years, the department reassigned 80% of its officers to the narcotics division.[491] By 1959, there was a 200% increase of all narcotics arrests – 6,374 from 2,128 in 1950.[492] In the LAPD's 1958 *Annual Reports*, western society is described as, "the decline and fall of mid-Victorian values in Anglo-American civilization leaving the individual to mature in a society that fails to establish a clear moral definition of right and wrong."[493] Congress shared Parker's sentiment that the United States was in a downward spiral and that something needed to be done to curb the use of illicit drugs.

Congressman Hale Boggs of Louisiana was the chairman of the Subcommittee on Narcotics in the early fifties. Boggs pushed for legislation to enact mandatory minimum sentences

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[489] "Teen-Age Dope Problem Called Beyond Control: Sheriff's Aide Stresses Education Needs; Parker Blames Narcotics for 50% of Crime." 1957.*Los Angeles Times (1923-1995)*, Dec 20, 5. https://colorado.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/teen-age-dope-problem-called-beyond-control/docview/167236921/se-2?accountid=14503. Accessed on December 17, 2021.

[490] O.W. *Wilson, Parker on Police*, 121.

[491] "Teen-Age Dope Problem Called Beyond Control: Sheriff's Aide Stresses Education Needs; Parker Blames Narcotics for 50% of Crime." 1957.*Los Angeles Times (1923-1995)*, Dec 20, 5. https://colorado.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/teen-age-dope-problem-called-beyond-control/docview/167236921/se-2?accountid=14503. (Accessed on December 17, 2021).

[492] Los Angeles Police Department *Annual Reports*, 1959, 22.

[493] Los Angeles Police Department *Annual Reports*, 1958, 15.

on individuals who were repeat drug offenders. As such, the Boggs Act of 1951 constituted penalties for the distribution and possession with two to five years for the first offense, five to ten for the second, and ten to fifteen for the third. Additionally, no probation would be offered to repeat offenders. Furthermore, a life sentence or the death penalty would be implemented on anyone caught selling heroin to minors. The act classified cannabis as a narcotic for the first time.[494] Since then, it has remained on the Drug Schedule as a Schedule I – "Substance has a high potential for abuse, has no medical use in the US, and has a lack of accepted safety for use under medical supervision."[495] Similar to Parker's claims that the courts take a passive role to keep offenders in prison, new laws implicated federal judges who were accused of not doing their part to incarcerate people in possession of illicit drugs.[496] Though such laws were framed to protect the public, more specifically (white) minors, these early laws were still part of a larger racial project. While congressional testimony provided a powerful narrative that seeped into the consciousness of millions of Americans, so-called drug experts asserted that all persons charged with possession of drugs were, in fact, addicts. No distinction was ever made to separate people who used drugs recreationally vis-à-vis those who were physically dependent on (illegal) drugs.[497]

The early drug wars revolved around protecting the virtue of youth; often depicted as innocent and white. The FBN claimed that between 1953 and 1956, African Americans comprised 61% of all drug addicts.[498] The origins of this rhetoric are certainly traceable to this era when both Parker and Boggs argued for harsher prison sentences for all alleged illicit drug users. To advance

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[494] Matthew Lassiter, "Pushers, Victims, and the Lost Innocence of White Suburbia: California's War on Narcotics during the 1950s," *Journal of Urban History* 2015, Vol. 41 (5) 787-807.
[495] Drug Schedule/Marose June 2005.
[496] Kathleen J. Frydl, *The Drug Wars in America,* 130.
[497] Suzanna Reiss, *We Sell Drugs,* 198.
[498] Ibid., 199.

this argument, racial anxieties were exploited by creating racial animus toward the brown and black communities of Los Angeles. Manipulating anxieties worsen when brown and black communities were associated with drug pushing. In large part because these communities were excluded from social privileges associated with whiteness and the legal protections that came with it. Cheryl Harris punctuates this point by stating, "The possessors of whiteness were granted the legal right to exclude others from the privileges inhering in whiteness; whiteness became an exclusive club whose membership was closely and grudgingly guarded."[499] This became a justification for Parker and the LAPD to protect white communities further by targeting youth of color for their supposed roles in drug peddling.

In the same era that Parker controlled the LAPD, federal drug offenses spiked. Between 1950 and 1965, people charged with narcotics possession and held in federal prisons nearly doubled – 2,017 in 1950 to 3,998 in 1965. By 1965, the average prison sentence for drug charges was 87.6 months.[500] Parker believed in giving stiffer sentences to people caught with illicit drugs. However, some prosecutors believed that first-time drug offenders should receive some form of clemency as an opportunity to rehabilitate. Parker countered and instead favored, "indiscriminate sentences in dope cases rather than mandatory penalties set by statute." Parker continued, "Until the solution to this whole narcotics problem is found, the longer violators are kept in custody – for life if we have to – the better off we're going to be!" Early on, prosecutors felt that first-time offenders for possession of narcotics should receive probation after spending ninety days in the

[499] Cheryl Harris, "Whiteness as Property," 283.
[500] Naomi Murakawa, *The First Civil Right: How Liberals Built Prison* America (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 64.

county jail. Even though some prosecutors believed that the real menace was the addict and not the seller. [501]

Drug laws, coupled with inflammatory rhetoric, became effective police tools against communities of color during Parker's time. The Red Scare strategies used during the 1920s were used in this drug war backdrop. Fabricating a faceless enemy – the addict – Parker began maneuvering his position as a defender of law and order. The public began to believe that addicts were moral deviants who lurked in the shadows. It worked insofar that they felt unprotected and that only a robust police force could protect them from deranged drug users. Police influence grew in matters concerning public safety. Parker and Anslinger used their authority to advance a narrative that drugs were the scourge of western society. This would have negative consequences in the future as drug experts who studied the causes of addiction are largely ignored today.[502]

The moral panics fabricated by Parker were also weaponized by the *Los Angeles Times.* They demanded that the LAPD step up their policing methods to apprehend gang members. Those who allegedly belonged to gangs were always young people of Mexican descent. The *Los Angeles Times* reported that at least 5,000 people were part of neighborhood gangs and all of them used illicit drugs. The hysteria concocted by Parker and the press elicited responses from readers who clamored to see these young men go to prison or sentenced to death row. The charged language used by the *Los Angeles Times* included "rat packs" and "wolf packs."[503] A fictional epidemic

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[501] "Stiff Penalties for First Narcotics Offense Hit: Prosecutors Tell Inquiry More Severe Terms are Needed for Second Convictions Dope Inquiry." *Los Angeles Times (1923-1995),* Dec 08, 1959. https://colorado.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/stiff-penalties-first-narcotics-offense-hit/docview/167617900/se-2?accountid=14503. (Accessed on December 18, 2021).

[502] Carl Hart, *The High Price: A Neuroscientist's Journey of Self-Discovery that Challenges Everything You Know About Drugs and Society*, (New York: Harper Perennial, 2013), 289-290.

[503] Matthew D. Lassiter, "Pushers, Victims, and the Lost Innocence of White Suburbia: California's War On Narcotics during the 1950s" *Journal of Urban History* Vol. 41 (5) 787-807.

produced by two powerful institutions made Los Angeles out to be a haven for criminals. People of Mexican descent and African Americans were presented as dangerous when using illicit drugs, such as cannabis and cocaine. Their association with drugs became constructed to manipulate racial anxieties. Other newspapers, such as the *New York Times,* published headlines in the early twentieth century with "Mexican Family Go Insane" and "Negro Cocaine "Fiends" New Southern Menace."[504] The reproduction of negative stereotypes had such powerful associations that it laid the groundwork for the police to target these communities.

During Parker's tenure, Los Angeles was considered the "Narcotics Capital of America." According to LAPD historian, James Woods, whose 1973 dissertation – later turned into a book – has been widely used by a variety of scholars to examine the trajectory of the LAPD. Unfortunately, the dissertation fails to critically examine the false narrative that the spread of illegal drugs stemmed from African and Mexican American neighborhoods.[505] Woods perpetuated the racial binary that communities of color were situated on the wrong side of the law when it came to drug usage. The data collected by the LAPD's *Annual Reports* show that nonwhite communities were arrested at a disproportionate rate than their white counterparts. Deploying police officers to specific sections of the city undoubtedly confirmed the data that nonwhites commit more crimes than Anglos. Parker used these statistics when he testified at city and federal hearings to vilify nonwhite communities.

In 1961, county officials supported a bill to violate people's constitutional rights to search automobiles. Senate Bill 1090 was supported by police departments all over California. Before the

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[504] "Negro Cocaine "Fiends" New Southern Menace" *New York Times*, Sunday, February 8, 1914, https://www.druglibrary.org/schaffer/history/negro_cocaine_fiends.htm (Accessed January 20, 2022). & Johann Hari, *Chasing the Scream: The First and Last Days of the War on Drugs* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2015), 15.
[505] James Woods, "The Progressives and the Police," 443.

bill was signed by Governor Brown, Parker outlined his support by stating, "I strongly believe that SB 1090, now pending in the Senate Judiciary Committee constitutes the absolute minimum provision that law enforcement officers must have to effectively deal with narcotics."[506] For years, LAPD officers had been searching for black motorists on alleged suspicions of drug peddling. To be stopped and searched became routine because of visible scars on people's arms. It was enough to warrant probable cause for officers to "shakedown" African Americans in neighborhoods, such as the Central Avenue district. Scholars like George M. O'Connor made arguments couched in a liberal sentiment that challenged the methods used by the LAPD. The racist practices led to a growing concern among some liberals who began to pathologize the black and brown communities. He wrote, "Racial restrictions breed frustration and hopelessness. It is for this reason that narcotics addiction is so prevalent among Negroes and persons of Mexican descent."[507] Political scientist Naomi Murakawa traces this sentiment back to the mid-century when the federal government responded to growing calls to quell racial violence. An explanation of criminality was invoked to try to make sense of why African Americans engaged in alleged criminal behavior. Murakawa notes, "Northern understandings of racial animus and racial progress also produced a particular profile of black criminality: the Bigger and Bumpers of liberal sociology. This liberal criminal profile of black men, black women, and black youth ossified with the hardening of post-World War II sensibilities of the psychological cost of discrimination."[508] Though liberal scholars

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[506] "Narcotics Auto Search Bill Backed: County Lawmakers Hail Supplemental Measure on Dope Narcotics Search." *Los Angeles Times (1923-1995),* May 10, 1961. https://colorado.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/narcotics-auto-search-bill-backed/docview/167900051/se-2?accountid=14503. (Accessed December 28, 2021).
[507] George M. O'Conner, "The Negro and the Police in Los Angeles,"144-146.
[508] Naomi Murakawa, *The First Civil Right,* 49.

attempted to understand why resentment festered, they failed to provide an adequate rationale to describe why the police themselves engaged in abysmal behavior.

The Central Avenue community was the busiest district of statistically reported arrests. When pouring through the *Annual Reports*, one can easily infer that the LAPD spent most of its time in this district. It was a racially mixed area with a history of leftist organizations confronting racist laws as far back as the 1920s.[509] Former chief, Daryl Gates, began his career patrolling the area. He said the district was

> a mixture of blacks, Hispanics, Asians, and whites, many of them newly arrived immigrants. [I] policed Skid Row, Main Street – with its B-girl bars and burlesque theaters – to East 5th and 6th Streets and Bunker Hill…it was bunch of beaten-down, dilapidated old tenements, rife with crime, narcotics, gambling, drunks, prostitutes, and wholesale scumbags.[510]

The LAPD would routinely patrol in search of vice activities violating the rights of the people who lived in this tightly dense region of the city.

By 1960, the Central Avenue district led all precincts with arrests. But the most eye-catching in the *Annual Reports* are the data collected in both 1956 and 1957. The significance of these two years is racial disparities were categorized and cross-referenced by total offenses. The aggregated data examined focuses on drug charges concerning race and gender. These are the two years during Parker's tenure in which the LAPD published a comprehensive itemization and categorization process known as "Descent and Sex." The 1956 *Annual Report* shows the LAPD arrested 3,704 adults on "Narcotics, Drug Laws." 1,178 of those people charged were Latino males using "LATINS" to categorize them, while 1,108 were African American males. Latinas comprised 142 of the arrests, whereas African American females made up 375 totaling 517

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[509] Daniel Hurewitz, *Bohemian Los Angeles and the Making of Modern Politics,* 194.
[510] Emily K. Hobson, "Policing Gay LA," 200.

arrestees. As a point of reference, 655 white males were arrested: a 138 difference. In the same year, Central led all drug-related offenses at 1,173.[511] The numbers increased the following year.

In 1957, narcotics charges in the Central Avenue district totaled 1,722. Hollenbeck Division was second with 420 total arrests. The importance of this is to highlight that Hollenbeck was in East Los Angeles, where many people of Mexican descent lived. Moreover, Latino and Latinas made up 1,302 of all narcotics charges. African American males and females totaled 1,776. Combined, Latino/as and African Americans were 3,078 out of 4,194 narcotics offenses – 73% of all total offenses. In these two years – 1956 and 1957 – black and brown people disproportionately represented 74% of all drug-related arrests.[512] According to the 1960's Federal Census, African Americans comprised approximately seven percent of the city's population.[513] The population of people of Mexican descent has proven to be more difficult to locate due to Mexicans (LATINS) being legally considered "white" by the federal government in 1960. Though the LAPD made sure to separate "LATINS" from "CAUCASIAN" in the *Annual Reports,* we can determine that the LAPD surveilled people of Mexican descent by reviewing their data. Nonetheless, these communities endured precise targeting by the LAPD when white residents were portrayed as innocent victims in the illicit drug markets. Often, the local press referred to these youth as "drug pushers" and "gangsters" bent on invading suburbia and demanded that the LAPD act immediately.[514] According to historian Matthew D. Lassiter, by 1960, half of the drug offenses in

[511] Los Angeles Police Department *Annual Reports*, 1956, 35.
[512] Los Angeles Police Department *Annual Reports*, 1956, 35, Los Angeles Police Department *Annual Reports*, 1957, 33-34.
[513] Federal Census, 1960. *Social Explorer*.
[514] Matthew D. Lassiter, "Pushers, Victims, and the Lost Innocence of White Suburbia." 787-807.

the entire state involved heroin. The defendant brought up these charges was typically in their mid-twenties, working-class, and of Mexican descent.[515]

Despite that most searches usually occurred in nonwhite communities, Parker used the scourge of drugs argument to harness support for his policing methods. Centering drugs and vice as character defects in the United States, Parker promoted his view that the United States needed to "undergo a moral and spiritual rebirth" if the nation was to survive international Communism. He called on the public to no longer remain apathetic toward vice activities. In doing so, Parker argued that he would do everything in his power to resist the "parasites" that flooded the city with narcotics in which he labeled, "Los Diabolos, the city of the devils."[516] To ensure that the public would accept his rallying call, Parker used familiar stereotypical tropes to incite alarm in an era that strongly rested on white supremacy and police repression.

When Parker spoke of crime and vice, he did so in a manner that reproduced narratives that were used in the past. Such an example included blaming the Italian Mafia for illegal activities ranging from gambling to counterfeiting to dope pushing. Parker said that the Mafia was involved in trafficking "white slavery." Though he did not elaborate to what this entailed, it was enough to isolate a community that was purposely used to conjure up negative images in the minds of whites captivated by absurd allegations of enslaved white people.[517] He declared that the Mafia code was extremely dangerous because of the murders they committed. Parker said these murders were used to silence individuals who testified against their mob bosses. Such rhetoric was analogous to the

[515] Matthew D. Lassiter, "Impossible Criminals: The Suburban Imperatives of America's War on Drugs" *The Journal of American History* June 2015 126-140.
[516] O.W. Wilson, *Parker on Police,* 33.
[517] Ibid., 56.

pulp novels published in popular culture at the time. However, for Parker, this became part and parcel of the political culture that he premised his reputation on – the savior persona.

The data provided by the LAPD's *Annual Reports* reveals how drug crimes were racialized. As early as the late nineteenth century, the United States began linking drugs to race while positioning whites as law abiding. White southerners held racist views that African Americans who consumed cocaine would unleash "sexual passions" unto white women, while south-westerners believed people of Mexican descent became violent when they smoked cannabis.[518] It was in this era when white people began using the word marijuana to connect cannabis to the Mexican population. The suggestion was that drug usage was a foreign problem in which Parker claimed Mexico was responsible for the increased flow of drugs into Los Angeles. As such, a moral crusade to combat drug users, peddlers, and pushers focused on the marginalized communities of Los Angeles. The department portrayed themselves as protectors who wanted defend the law abiding citizens from people different from them. An approach of combating crime not just through a drug pusher and victim binary, but also socially and racially constructing nonwhite vis-à-vis white.[519] Cloaked in a thinly veil of racism, associating immoral behaviors, such as drug usage, was racialized through classifications that cross-referenced offenses. Matthew Lassiter notes, "The pusher/peddler framework resonated because it fused the categories of race, gender, class, age, and space in potent ways – constructing both the physical landscapes of the single-family suburbs and the symbolic terrain of white middle-class society as utopian ideals threaten by dystopian nightmares."[520] The LAPD was not simply concerned with maintaining law

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[518] Douglas Clark Kinder, "Cold Warrior: Harry J. Anslinger and Illicit Narcotics Traffic," *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 50 No. 2 (May, 1981), pp/ 169-191.
[519] Matthew D. Lassiter, "Pushers, Victims, and the Lost Innocence of White Suburbia: California's War On Narcotics during the 1950s" *Journal of Urban History* Vol. 41 (5) 787-807.
[520] Ibid., 788.

and order, but upholding white supremacy as its virtue to separate themselves from those they criminalized daily.

When Parker became chief, he presented himself as battle-harden warrior who would go to any lengths to protect the public from criminal and foreign forces. As the leader of a so-called rugged police department, it not only legitimatized his authority in matters concerning vice, but it also consolidated his power and relevancy around the United States as the country's number-one cop. Exploiting the public's fear strengthened Parker's position as police chief even if this meant reinforcing the violent and discretionary powers exercised by the LAPD. Those who were unfortunately on the receiving end of these violent tactics were typically powerless. Indeed, the LAPD was revered as the model of police professionalism, but the violence committed over a nonwhite population became and remained endemic to the culture of the department – a reputation that would certainly exalt his image among other police departments.

The Rise and Fall of the Central Avenue

The Central Avenue district was the city's entertainment center during the mid-century. The music scene drew people from all over Los Angeles. Filled with a vibrant nightlife where people congregated, they ventured down to the Avenue for a night of music, cocktails, and mingling with people after working long hours throughout the week.[521] Often, white celebrities, such as Ava Gardner and Lana Turner frequented the nightclubs as well as middle-class white women in an open and seemingly carefree environment.[522] People gathered to enjoy themselves

[521] Ralph Eastman, "Central Avenue Blues: The Making of Los Angeles Rhythm and Blues, 1942 -1947," *Black Music Research Journal, Spring*, 1989, Vol No. 1 19-33.
[522] Mina Yang, "A Thin Blue Line Down Central Avenue," 217-39.

while dancing the night away to jazz and swing as if the music was their personal soundtrack in a city where the racial fissures were part of the landscape. Central Avenue even had its own de facto mayor, Esyan Mosby. Mosby spoke of well-known celebrities who spent time on the Avenue, including singers like Frank Sinatra. Though Central Avenue was heavily policed, it was a community where African Americans were able to live with some semblance of dignity during an era when racism pierced every aspect of life. It was a thriving area for African Americans that dated back to the early twentieth century when many fled the Jim Crow terrorism to begin new lives. According to longtime resident Verna Williams, "In the twenties, Central Avenue was a beautiful communicative life. We were all just like one big family."[523] It was the cultural hub for African Americans, and it became a large part of their Los Angeles heritage.

Though the history of Central Avenue has been obfuscated by various tumultuous points in Los Angeles history, a reexamination of both the area and era must be appreciated to understand how the LAPD disrupted the once harmonious district. Indeed, Central Avenue was originally a location for African Americans in search of economic opportunities and housing, however, they were driven there because of the "Keep the neighborhood white" campaigns found throughout Los Angeles. It led to "creating dangerous overcrowding and scandalous health conditions" while city officials rarely provided help.[524] A byproduct of such racist campaigns led to the development of black-owned businesses, entrepreneurship, and eventually a blistering interracial nightlife. Some residents considered "The Avenue" a miniature version of Harlem that attracted leaders from various parts of the country.[525] As such, the Dunbar Hotel was built because whites refused African

[523] Los Angeles History Project, Ode to Central Avenue https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJFC7AKtLY4.
[524] Raphael J. Soneshein, *Politics in Black and White*, 29.
[525] Lonnie G. Bunch, "A Past Not Necessarily Prologue," 110.

Americans to stay in their establishments, including celebrities. The Dunbar hosted well-known African Americans, like Ella Fitzgerald, Duke Ellington, Dr. W.E.B. DuBois, Langston Hughes, Joe Lewis, and Cab Calloway.[526] The hotel also hosted a wide range of community events that welcomed everyone. The Dunbar Hotel was the brainchild of two members of the Los Angeles chapter of the NAACP – Vida and John Somerville. Both were practicing dentists and graduates of the School of Dentistry at the University of Southern California.[527] John Somerville was born in Jamaica and arrived in Los Angeles in 1902. When he witnessed the lack of living accommodations for black people, he and other civic leaders, strived to build a four-story hotel in the heart of Central Avenue at 42nd Place. Notable, the labor put into constructing the hotel was at the behest of African American craftsmanship.[528] A black middle-class emerged, but poverty also existed side-by-side on Central Avenue.[529] Still, the corridor of Central Avenue represented a source of pride for African Americans who poured into the city from various locations around the United States.

As the popularity of Central Avenue clubs grew, the LAPD began disrupting the night scene to socially control the landscape. By the time Parker died, the district had lost its bustling nightlife. For the early jazz musicians who lived during this era and were familiar with Parker's brand of racist policing tactics, the clubs became a site of intimidation and harassment. Jazz was considered black music and policed as such. White officers segregated people in this area by heavily patrolling the area. Jazz and African Americans were contained through a system of

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[526] Los Angeles History Project, "Ode to Central Avenue" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJFC7AKtLY4.
[527] Lonnie G. Bunch, "A Past Not Necessarily Prologue,"111.
[528] Hadley Meares, "When Central Avenue Swung: The Dunbar Hotel and the Golden Age of LA's 'Little Harlem'" *History and Society* https://www.kcet.org/history-society/when-central-avenue-swung-the-dunbar-hotel-and-the-golden-age-of-l-a-s-little-harlem (Accessed on January 4, 2021).
[529] Raphael J. Soneshein, *Politics in Black and White*, 29.

surveillance, Musicologists Mina Yang notes, "The LAPD focused on the Central Avenue club scene in order to discipline the music that grew out of a population that was seen as increasingly unwieldy and threatening."[530] The interracial nightclub scene became an issue for Parker and despised the fact that various races and ethnicities came together to enjoy themselves. The atmospheric Central Avenue also attracted youth of Mexican descent that mixed with people from various social and racial backgrounds. This drew the ire of the LAPD. They hounded the Mexican youngsters by asking a series of questions and checking identifications usually without provocation.[531]

The jazz musicians knew that the LAPD recruited officers from the deep south. The growth of Central Avenue collided with an emerging police force that carried out Parker's philosophy of barring different races and ethnicities from converging. The recruitment of white racist southerners became deeply ingrained into the structural forces of policing. Narratives from the people who were present when Parker unleashed these officers onto Central Avenue revive the true accounts of what transpired. Delgado and Stefancic argue, "Powerfully written stories and narratives may begin a process of correction in our system of believes and categories by calling attention to neglected evidence and reminding readers of our common humanity."[532] The neglected evidence is centered when the voices of the musicians share their first-hand accounts of police harassment. Musician Harry "Sweets" Edison describes the Gestapo style of policing as the main source of the demise of the district. He recollected, "I think I can explain the deterioration of Central Avenue. The police department mostly closed up Central Avenue, of course, the intermixing and things like that." Singer, Ernie Andrews added, "I think there was some harassment with the police and some

[530] Mina Yang, "A Thin Blue Line Down Central Avenue," 217-239.
[531] Ibid.
[532] Richard Delgado and Stephanie, *Critical Race Theory*, 51.

of these parties who didn't like the idea of people, especially you know the young white ladies coming down and mingling in the clubs." Edison notes that most of the police officers were hired from the south bringing their prejudiced attitudes with them.[533] When Parker assumed power, he directed his officers to target known users of narcotics to boost up arrest numbers. Recall that Parker relied on statistics to deploy police officers in certain locales around the city.[534] People with previous drug charges became known to officers patrolling the area creating a hostile and sometimes dangerous environment.[535] Narcotics possession may have been the basis to stop, search, and detain alleged users, but other reasons, such as a boom in black businesses became more disconcerting for the LAPD.

The economic success among black businesses did not go unnoticed by the LAPD. Officers disrupted the flow of capital coming into the area. Musicians have detailed that white patrons spent a copious amount of money in these clubs, which went directly to the local black-owned clubs. Exorbitant drink prices and entry fees allowed for wealth accumulation. Yet, gaining economic freedom and accumulated wealth threatened the power structure of the city and LAPD. African Americans were restricted to certain sections of Los Angeles that reduced their chances of attaining wealth. More importantly, to pass on wealth to future generations, the lack of prospects for African American families made it increasingly difficult to purchase a home. Owning a home was a pathway to attaining such wealth, but the residents of Central Avenue had to fight for this. Some did manage to own homes, especially after the US Supreme Court declared in 1948 that restrictive

[533] Ernie Andrews Blues for Central Avenue, 1988, Produced and directed by Lois Shelton. New York: Rhapsody Films.
[534] Ian F. Haney López, *The Chicano Fight for Justice,* 141.
[535] Mina Yang, "A Thin Blue Line Down Central Avenue," 217-39.

housing covenants were illegal.[536] They began moving west toward Baldwin Hills and the West Adams area.[537] The latter being the site of the unsolved bombings discussed earlier.[538]

The thriving businesses made it possible for some people to buy homes in the area. In the first half of the twentieth century, Los Angeles, specifically the Central Avenue region, had the highest percentages of black-owned homes. Because the LAPD would heavily patrol the areas looking for any excuse to roust African Americans after dark, many had spare bedrooms for guests to avoid the imminent danger that awaited them out on the streets.[539] It was reminiscent of the sundown towns in other parts of the country.[540] Historian Kelly Lytle Hernández writes, "To remain beyond the boundaries after dark was to be policed."[541] In 1952, blues singer, Jimmy Witherspoon was stopped and detained by the LAPD for alleging driving drunk. When he requested a sobriety test, he was refused. Instead, the officers responded by pulverizing Witherspoon as he was violently thrown into the rear of their squad car.[542] Examples such as this gives us a glimpse into the social control and intimidation tactics that the LAPD employed over a population who did not yet have political representation in the city government. Though Witherspoon was well-known at the time, we must also acknowledge the high probability of numerous attacks on black civilians that went unreported except preserved through oral histories.

As more and more African Americans moved to the area, policing was intensified. The LAPD hounded black patrons standing in front of clubs by harassing them and dragging them to

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[536] Mina Yang, "A Thin Blue Line Down Central Avenue," 217-39.
[537] Raphael J. Soneshein, *Politics in Black and White,* 55.
[538] George M. O'Connor, "The Negro and the Police," 138.
[539] Los Angeles History Project, Ode to Central Avenue.
[540] James Loewen, "Was your town a sundown town?" *UUWorld,* https://www.uuworld.org/articles/was-your-town-sundown-town.
[541] Kelly Lytle Hernández, *City of Inmates,* 164.
[542] Martin J. Schiesl, "Behind the Badge," 156.

jail. A deaconess in her late fifties recalled when the police illegally entered her home without a search warrant and described the LAPD as "badge-wearing psychos."[543] The LAPD continued its reign of terror throughout the 1950s. In 1954, the owner of a Rhythm and Blues record store organized a demonstration that demanded the police stop harassing their customers. At least 150 business owners stood in solidarity with the record store. The protests began when LAPD officers prevented white customers from entering the store and claimed, "it was too dangerous to hang around Black neighborhood."[544]

The differences in policing between black and white neighborhoods was polarizing. Unemployment in the African Community averaged around twenty percent by 1965.[545] The area faced constant around-the-clock policing, which frustrated residents. When three clashes on Central Avenue occurred on a weekend in April of 1964 between the LAPD and residents, the Congress of Racial Equality warned Governor Edmund Brown and the US Attorney General that violence was certain to erupt unless something was done to assuage concerns; it was just a matter of time before the city ignited. True to his victimhood posturing, Parker decried in the local press, "Negroes are hostile, police are victims."[546]

The evidence against the LAPD of being a trigger-happy department was mounting. Between January 1, 1962, and July 31, 1965, the LAPD murdered more than sixty people, most were unarmed.[547] Eleven days later, residents confronted the California Highway Patrol (CHP) after reaching their boiling point of segregation, police brutality, underemployment, inadequate healthcare, and living in abject poverty. It was of little importance to the residents of which

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[543] Kelly Lytle Hernández, *City of Inmates,* 189.
[544] Mike Davis, *City of Quartz,* 294.
[545] Ibid.
[546] Kelly Lytle Hernández, *City of Inmates,* 192.
[547] Ibid., 192.

policing institution – the CHP or LAPD – was harassing members of the community. They both represented state-sponsored repression. What did matter was that the community had enough. The Rebellion that ensued was not spontaneous. It is dismissive to say that it was. Residents had been frustrated because of the refusal to acknowledge or discipline police officers for the violence they committed on their communities.[548] Moreover, it is no coincidence that the Los Angeles chapter of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense set up their headquarters on Central Avenue because the area was in dire need of community support. Of course, we know they would later be raided by the LAPD on the morning of December 8, 1969.[549]

The LAPD continued to control the urban landscape by imposing its paramilitary style of policing on nonwhite residents. They grew into a department that many saw as a bulwark for white supremacy and right-wing ideologies. As such, LAPD's role in these historical processes presented itself as the savior in preserving the social order. To dispel this myth, history has shown this to be untrue. Like many Angelinos who have witnessed or been victims of the LAPD's brutal tactics throughout the twentieth century, many have resisted this oppressive institution. Yet, to this day, people from working-class and nonwhite communities continue to experience surveillance, intimidation, violence, incarceration, and criminalization. It is not revisionist history, but an actual account of what transpired during the Parker era, where an authoritarian institution with little regard for human life continues to be seen as the only protection from criminals. Unless we begin reallocating our resources back into the most disenfranchised communities, we will continue to be at the mercy of unfettered power.

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[548] Elizabeth Hinton, *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime,* 69.
[549] Ibid., 206.

Conclusion

I began this research because I experienced hyper-policing in Los Angeles in the 1990s. As I mentioned in the introduction, 1992 became a turning point for many of us as we watched in dismay after four white LAPD officers were acquitted for ruthlessly beating an unarmed African American motorist named Rodney King. Today, his name is well-known around the world. But the reason why he is known is because of the brutality inflicted by the LAPD. The harrowing truth is that police violence in the United States is normalized. When I began this project, my goal was to interrogate the LAPD's history to inform people of the early police abuses that created the conditions that led to unrest throughout the twentieth century and recently, the summer of 2020. I also wanted to posthumously uplift the voices of marginalized people from the William Parker era. The LAPD has a tarnished reputation of police brutality, which is significant to understand how they operated with impunity.

The stories highlighted in this research are meant to empower communities who were excluded from being protected by the criminal legal system. Their experiences reveal that the "to protect and serve" motto was not intended for them. Unchecked police powers will continue to wreak havoc unless we hold these powerful institutions accountable like our predecessors, the CRC, NAACP, ACLU, CPUSA, Mattachine Society, Black Panther Party, and Brown Berets did. It is important to note that the police exist and functions to preserve a social order that precluded marginalized groups from gaining power. I do not believe that the police will share such power with underserved communities. How can an institution designed to punish and criminalize the defenseless be willing to operate horizontally? Until a reduction of power is implemented, then

the communities most affected will continue to be exposed to a social order that ignores rights and liberties that the United States purports to uphold.

Parker's Legacy

Parker died of a heart attack on July 16, 1966, at a banquet put on by the Second Marine Division Association to honor him.[550] The award ceremony can be surmised as another opportunity to receive approval from the white public, especially after the Watts Rebellion had just occurred a year before. Before he died, he continued to incite the racial fears as he had done throughout his career by saying:

> It's estimated by 1970 that… 45% of the metropolitan area of Los Angeles will be Negro…Now how are you going to live with that without law enforcement? This is the lesson that we refuse to recognize, that you can't convert every person into a law abiding citizen. If you want any protection in your home and family in the future, you're going to have to stop this abuse, but you're going to have to get in and support a strong police department. If you don't do that, come 1970 God help you!

To say that Parker left a complicated legacy is to ignore the facts. The daily interactions fraught with police misconduct and racism were unquestionable for people of Mexican descent, African Americans, leftists, and the queer community. A blatant disregard to people's experiences is shortsighted and disrespects the legacy of the those who bore the well-known violence propagated by the LAPD under Parker's authoritarian rule. The accolades Parker received throughout his career cannot obfuscate the abuses committed by the LAPD. He left a blueprint for other police departments to emulate. It should not matter that Parker professionalized the LAPD. Instead, what

[550] Bob Taylor, "Reflections – Chief William H. Parker" *The Hot Sheet: Publication of the Los Angeles Police Museum,* No. 72 April – May 2016.

needs to be scrutinized is how he normalized racism within one of the largest police departments in the United States. I am not arguing that the LAPD was not plagued with racism before his tenure, but Parker further entrenched this by tying crime to race with "police science." This could be seen in the *Annual Reports* that led to heavy deployment in densely populated nonwhite neighborhoods. Today, the Los Angeles Police Department holds the dubious distinction for being a department where violence is common.[551] The so-called "blue lives matter" campaign began because Parker promoted the "thin blue line" rhetoric that eventually morphed into a right-wing opposition against a political and social movement that demands the stopping of murdering predominantly working-class, people of color, especially African Americans.

The social and racial fissures broadened by Parker and the LAPD are the causes that led to the uprisings before his death. Since then, social divisions have become more common. If there is a Parker in every city, there will be police violence and killings aimed at marginalized groups. More importantly, there will also be righteous communities that will challenge and confront municipal authoritarianism that conceals its true nature steeped in violence and pernicious intent.

[551] Stuart Schrader, *Badges without Border: How Global Counterinsurgency Transformed American Policing*, (Oakland: University of California Press, 2019), 225.

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